923.1 G462c

Glasgow

Continental statesmen

304220

BOOK NO. 923.1 G462c | ACCESSION 304220

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

FORM 3431 20M 1-41

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00018 9410

M. BRIAND

(From a drawing by M. Noël Dorville)

[*Frontispiece*

CONTINENTAL STATESMEN

By

GEORGE GLASGOW

"*Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*"
—Horace, *Epistles*, I. 2, 14

GEOFFREY BLES
22 SUFFOLK STREET PALL MALL
LONDON S.W.1

First Published. 1930

923.1
G462c
304220

Printed in Great Britain
by Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd.
Bungay, Suffolk.

3 1223 00618 9410

TO

DR. G. P. GOOCH

PREFACE

ENCYCLOPÆDIC records of the lives of contemporary European statesmen are obtainable from existing works of reference. What is attempted in the present volume is a more personal examination of the sort of men who now wield influence in Europe. The scope is confined to continental Europe. It is there that the rivalry and fear which produced the Great War continue to militate against the normal decency and security of life. The problem of Europe is regarded by some students as insoluble except under the chastening influence of time, the difficulty being that the processes of time tend to be interrupted by convulsions such as threw Europe into savagery from 1914 to 1918. The problem, reduced to its simplest essential, is how to remove a deep-rooted sense of fear which the continental nations habitually feel towards each other; for this fear continues to produce the results that are feared. Much depends upon the quality of the men who conduct the diplomacy, and are responsible for the policies, of the European Governments. It is the purpose of the chapters that follow to try to measure the quality of contemporary European statesmen in relation to the task that faces them.

These men and the work they now do may save Europe from war, or may plunge her into war, when some general crisis, near or distant, arises. Such crises have arisen in the past, and may arise again. It is probably fair to surmise that the future security of Europe largely depends upon the present statesmen of Europe. Most of the leading statesmen who figure in the following pages I have met personally at conferences and during travel; some of them I have met often; I have discussed European problems with them; and it has been my

business to follow their works continuously during the past ten years.

Foreign names tend to become impersonal in the minds of the general public, even of those who take a broad interest in diplomacy. It is almost impossible for men and women whose minds are primarily occupied with work of their own, unconnected with foreign affairs, to form a clear, comprehensive view of the careers and personalities of the statesmen of Europe. Even those who, as the present writer, spend much of their time in the study of Europe, are apt to find that the more they know the less they understand. None the less, there are certain impressions, and certain incontrovertible facts, which seem worth recording for the benefit of such readers as may not have the time to gather them for themselves. A good deal of matter relevant to the present line of inquiry is embedded in the monthly summary of foreign affairs which I have contributed to the *Contemporary Review* during the past seven years. Some of it I have used again, and I am grateful to the editors for allowing me to do so.

A remarkable work was published in Vienna in 1928 under the title "Men of To-day and Their Works." The matter is triplicated in three languages (German, English, French) set out in parallel columns and pages; the work runs to several volumes; one volume gives a biographical sketch of a few representative statesmen, bankers, industrialists, financiers, artists, professional men in most countries of the world, with a photograph of each person described. The editor, Arpad Keitner, explains that his object is to try to remove international misunderstanding by greater knowledge of one nation by another. It is a good object, well and interestingly executed. A comparable service, incidental to its much

larger purpose, is likely to be performed by the new (14th) edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," in which the biographies have been invested with a more human interest than was attempted in past editions of that great work.

It is probably true, with certain marked exceptions, that the more we know of people and of nations the less we feel inclined to quarrel with them. The present book attempts, in greater detail than (as far as I know) is readily available, to explain the sort of men who to-day wield influence in Europe.

I am grateful to Mr. H. R. Westwood of the *Review of Reviews* for a selection of cartoons and caricatures that have appeared in that paper; and to Mr. Wickham Steed, the editor of the paper, for allowing me to reproduce them. Five of the illustrations that appear in the book have been taken from that source.

London, 1929. GEORGE GLASGOW.

"If disaster comes, if bloodshed comes, as it often has in our history, the politicians always escape. The worst that can happen to the politician is loss of office; and the men who give their blood are generally those whose hands have had nothing to do with the laying of the train that led to the explosion."

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, House of Commons, July 26th, 1929.

LIST OF CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE	v
I.	THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND	1
II.	FRANCE	6
III.	GERMANY	56
IV.	ITALY	74
V.	SPAIN	97
VI.	AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY	106
VII.	CZECHOSLOVAKIA	111
VIII.	JUGOSLAVIA	135
IX.	GREECE	149
X.	RUSSIA	171
XI.	LITHUANIA AND POLAND	199
XII.	PAX BOREALIS	212
XIII.	SOME EFFECTS OF CONTINENTAL DIPLOMACY ON WORLD AFFAIRS	220
	INDEX	237

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

M. BRIAND	*Frontispiece*
	PAGE
M. HERRIOT	25
M. LOUCHEUR	27
M. CAILLAUX	53
DR. BREITSCHEID	73
PRESIDENT MASARYK	113
DR. BENEŠ	123
M. VENISELOS	151
M. LITVINOV	175
MARSHAL PILSUDSKI	209

CONTINENTAL STATESMEN

CHAPTER ONE: THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

THOSE people whose fate it was to have reached manhood or womanhood before the Great War broke out, to survive the period of that war, and to be alive during the evolutions and disturbances that followed it, are in varying degree perplexed by the experience through which they have passed. To many people Europe is a disquieting mosaic of conflicting conditions. There is probably no continent, certainly no comparable area of the world's surface, which in history has been responsible for so much catastrophe, so much bloodshed, so much material destruction, so much obstruction of human progress. In China, to take a contrast, they have been engaged for eighteen years in intermittent civil war; but one year of civil war in China does less damage to the sum of human affairs than one day of a big European war. European disturbances throw the world out of gear. To recall that the murder in July 1914 of an Austrian Archduke by a Serbian student had the effect of bringing an American army to Europe to fight in a war against Germany is not simply to recall an accident of chance. It is a true symbol of something European, and its truth is not unfairly pointed by being thus epitomised.

Judged by its record of butchery, Europe may be argued to be the most uncivilised continent in the world. Yet it is a paradoxical phenomenon, in which extremes of culture and of science go hand in hand with extremes of barbarity.

Ten years having passed since the Great War ended, Europe is again fashioning its future. The diplomatists of Europe, the political statesmen and other leading persons are engaged now in decisive work. It matters greatly whether the present builders of Europe are good at their work.

Probably because of their decisive power for good or evil, the political leaders in Europe are popularly well known, at any rate by name. Such names as Mussolini, Veniselos, Masaryk, Beneš, Briand, Poincaré, Stresemann, for instance, do suggest something, if a little vaguely, to people who read their newspapers. Others, less well known, are in their lesser degree contributing to the building. There are a certain few political persons in Europe whose competent statesmanship and pacific purpose have been tested during the past few years. There are others, the identity of whom may be inferred from the pages that follow, whose effect is more controversial.

The ruling persons of Europe are divisible into three main classes: (1) the politicians; (2) the diplomatists; (3) the financiers and the industrialists. It seems a sad reflection on the democratic ideal that mischief has mainly been caused by the first class, the politicians. The professional diplomatist and the professional financier are both protected by a vested interest in peace. War to a diplomatist spells failure, to a financier immediate (if transient) disaster. If international diplomatists and international financiers were by themselves responsible for the decision between war and peace, there would be little danger of war at any time.

By an unfortunate paradox, however, it is the politician who gets most of the limelight. Both the regular diplomatist and the regular financier work in private,

and it matters little to them what an electorate may feel. In quiet times, for instance, a diplomatist is content to suspend action. One knows of certain diplomatists in London, the representatives of non-controversial Powers, who for long periods are mainly occupied in playing golf and giving dinner-parties, agreeably to themselves and to others, and without detriment to the interests of their Governments. The politician, by contrast, must at all times be up and doing. He must even make a noise, lest he be ignored; for publicity is an indispensable means to his power.

There results from that circumstance a certain unhealthy condition attaching to political work, a tendency to government for its own sake, a disease of government. Government tends to take too much upon itself. Those who suffer from the disease in its extreme form frankly claim that most things should be organised by "the State," that Government should become a sort of Governess regulating the public and private life of all citizens down to minute details, moral as well as practical. At the opposite philosophic end from the socialist stands the anarchist, whose view is that Government should work within the minimum, not the maximum, scope, and that apart from fundamental considerations of common convenience such as the protection of life and property, Government should be denied all competence.

Healthy people are content to tolerate the pompous and busybody politicians so long as their exuberance is merely tiresome; but unfortunately the notoriety they gain is itself valuable to them. Most people differ in their opinion about most things, and those whom a good many people deride, the people of another temper promptly take to extolling. The capacity of people in general for active disagreement, involving the taking of

sides even on irrelevant issues, is well-nigh inexhaustible, and a politician who provokes resentment, by the same token provokes applause.

In any case, the politician, if he is to keep his name alive in public opinion, must always be doing something. He cannot lie fallow as the diplomatist can lie fallow. If he has a sense of humour, he can avoid doing harm, and may do good: M. Briand, for example. If, however, he combines an earnestness of purpose to do something with a lack of vision and of proportion in the execution, he becomes not only a public bore, but a public nuisance. Simplicity itself, normally the best human quality, may become a fault. When, for example, M. Poincaré hitched his simplicity to the slogan: "Delenda est Germania," he became a nuisance to normal healthy people. Too much earnestness and too little elasticity made him a danger to the very peace that was his motive.

The disease of government in Europe is a matter that deserves to be investigated. The political statesmen who on the one hand have the sense to recognise the limitations of government as a practical means to common convenience, and on the other hand have enough sense of caution to understand that popular emotion is mischievous and ought to be lulled rather than excited—such politicians, of whom Dr. Marx is an example, are few and far to seek. The late Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Baldwin are further examples. Signor Mussolini hardly belongs to that category. The fact that for the moment Signor Mussolini has done good to Italy is of less permanent value than the effect that will live after him. The test will be applied when he goes, as go he must sooner or later. Will Italy be in a better or worse state than before he began his work? The Swedish politicians, on the other hand, are little known outside Sweden and

are hardly better known inside Sweden. They are of the exceptional Baldwin type; they shrink from publicity and from excitement. The quiet prosperity of Sweden is a phenomenon not unconnected with the insignificance of her politicians.

It will, I believe, emerge from the pages that follow that the traditional curse of Europe—fear, distrust, war—is to some extent related to the poor quality of the average European politician combined with the abnormal prestige attaching to his name. The eminently wise politicians of Europe can be counted on one's fingers. The rest, to be counted in their hundreds, tend to perpetuate the peculiarly muddled stupidity of European relationships. In most European countries, to an even more marked degree than in Great Britain, the general level of intellectual and spiritual quality among the politicians is below the standard of most of the professions—legal, clerical or literary—and of big finance and industry. Hence, to some extent, the unnecessary persistence of war as a European habit.

CHAPTER TWO: FRANCE

§ 1. The Political Arena

POST-WAR France has been torn between two conflicting political forces, one of which has been identified with M. Poincaré, the other with M. Briand. The minor personalities have tended to fall into place within the one or the other orbit.

If one tried to diagnose in a sentence the difference between the two, one might say that M. Poincaré has been mainly actuated by fear of Germany, whereas M. Briand's humour, irony and gentle cynicism have saved him from a too vivid memory of the past, given him a far-sighted judgment of what is most needed in the future, and made of him one of the agreeable personalities of our time. His career suggests that in European politics a little good-natured tolerance may do good; whereas M. Poincaré has shown that unbending sincerity may even do harm.

France is a country distinguished in medicine, in science and in the arts, but politically undistinguished. Her doctors, scientists and artists have benefited the whole world; her politicians have worked on a lower plane.

The quality of French political thought no doubt suffers from the constant uncertainties resulting from the party system. In England, to take a contrast, the electorate directly decides what single party is to form a government. In France the electorate votes for a group of parties—of which there are about ten—but the ultimate government resulting from the election cannot be foretold. It depends upon a system of bargaining, conducted secretly between various groups elected. No single group can ever by itself form a

government with any prospect of surviving for more than a day. In a subsequent section will be found a detailed chronicle of a particular political crisis in Paris and of the method of its solution.

In France therefore the electorate is usually confused in its mind as to its object in voting, and is usually taken by surprise in what it produces. As Ministerial security depends largely on a system of party bargains, it is hardly surprising that irregularities and tactical shiftiness have become a feature of French parliamentary life. The confusion is made worse by the machinery of parliament, an important factor of which is the system of twenty-one permanent commissions, representing the various groups and asserting the Chamber's control over legislation.

In practice the various parties tend to conglomerate into three main blocs, the parties of the Right, of the Centre (Bloc National) and of the Left (the Cartel des Gauches). At the 1928 election, for instance, the Right (Conservatives, 18; and Republican Democratic Union 158) won 176 seats; the Centre (Republicains de Gauche, 93; Radical Republicans, 61) won 154 seats; the Left (Socialist Radicals, 117; Socialist Republicans, 45; Socialists, 101; Communist Socialists, 2; Communists, 14) won 279. The Alsatians (3) brought the total seats to 612. The resultant Prime Minister was M. Poincaré (Centre), who gave the portfolio of Justice to M. Barthou (Centre), the portfolio of Foreign Affairs to M. Briand (Left, Secretary-General of the Socialist Party), the portfolio of Labour to M. Loucheur (Left, belonging to the Gauche Radicale, a party that stands between the Bloc National and the Cartel des Gauches). The parties of the Right are to a great extent influenced by the anomalous phenomenon known as the Action

Française, of whose activities some indication is given in a later section on M. Charles Maurras. The Action Française itself did not win a single seat at the 1928 election, but is powerful, as will be made clear below, in other ways.

Party politics in France are a complicated muddle. The chief figures of French politics are not distinctively tarred with their party brush, as are, for instance, British politicians. In the sections that follow some personal facts are given about M. Briand, M. Poincaré, M. Herriot, M. Loucheur, M. Barthou, M. Millerand, M. Caillaux, M. Finaly, M. Charles Maurras, all of whom have played a prominent part in French political life, and most of whom are likely to be the outstanding French personalities in the future.

§ 2. M. Briand

M. Briand shares with Dr. Beneš the distinction of having exercised an almost unbroken continuity of post-war power. He took his part in the making of the treaties in 1919, he has taken his part in revising them, has dealt with their consequences and faced his own music almost continuously for ten years. The mention of his name raises little bitterness anywhere. He has been as tenacious of the true interests of France as ever M. Poincaré could have wanted to be, yet he excites as little resentment in the Wilhelmstrasse as in Whitehall. He has remarkably few enemies. Inasmuch as it is the essential object of international statesmanship not to make enemies, his gift for soothing passions and for disarming ill-will is a rare asset in a Europe torn by obstinate fears and hasty tempers. His quiet, consistently pacific work is not spectacular in its effect, and

rather misses the recognition it merits. In a former book * I wrote of M. Briand thus: "He is one of the most interesting personalities in Europe. In repose, he looks like a tired tramp, with his unending *cigarette jaune* hanging from his lips. The moment he speaks, his whole temper seems to be transformed, and he becomes an agile and animated orator and a skilled debater, with a genius for diplomatic rapier-work. At conferences he was a match for Mr. Lloyd George in the kind of finesse, flair, knack, readiness of repartee for which Mr. Lloyd George was justly famous throughout Europe. He has a better title to the rôle of vagabond than that of his dejected appearance. Was it not soon after giving up the Prime Ministership of France in 1922 that, in the course of his daily life as a private citizen, he wandered about unshaven and alone, except for the company of his *cigarettes jaunes*, in a lonely wood in the French provinces; was arrested by the gendarmes of a small village as a vagrant, and being unable to produce his papers, was detained at the police station for a night pending documentary identification; and when identified, justified, apologised to and released the next morning, took his captors for a drink at the village café?

"He is imperturbable, except under the influence of his own oratory. His famous golf match at Cannes, which I happened to witness, was typical of his humour. Mr. Lloyd George being a golfer, it was a natural part of the day's work on January 4th (or thereabouts), 1922, that what was virtually a meeting of the conference was held on the terrace of the golf-club house during luncheon. Philippe Millet and myself were having luncheon at the next table, having played a round in the morning. Mr. Lloyd George, in the middle of conference talk and

* "From Dawes to Locarno." London, Benn; New York, Harper.

luncheon, gaily challenged M. Briand to a match at 'the golf,' and M. Briand, who had never handled a golf club in his life, equally gaily, but with his deceptive air of unruffled dejection, accepted. The match started at once after luncheon. M. Briand was matched with Sir Edward Grigg against Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Riddell. M. Briand took the honour and did good 'business'; started with a left-hand grip for a right-hand stance; was corrected by Mr. Lloyd George; stopped at the top of his swing with the remark 'J'hésite,' and generally behaved in such a way as to scandalise the normal gravity of his countrymen."

When later the *cigarettes jaunes* were denied him by his doctors, he bore the affliction with the good-tempered resignation that has always supported him in crises. His physical stamina too is a remarkable thing, and he gave a remarkable example of it in 1926. He was sixty-four. He had had an exceptionally trying period of office. He had not been well for several months. His doctors had taken away from him his cigarettes—a serious blow to a man who had smoked them at the rate of fifty a day for nearly fifty years. His nerves could not have been improved by a sudden sentence to complete abstention. In such circumstances the record of what he did on the eve of the Geneva meetings must be regarded as something of a physical achievement. He sat through an all-night sitting of the French Chamber on Friday night (March 5th–6th), and being beaten on his financial programme, went straight to the Elysée (7 a.m. of Saturday, March 6th) to resign. He then went through various trying formalities during several hours, met Sir Austen Chamberlain at the station, went with him to the British Embassy for an exchange of views, conversed also with Señor Quinones de Leon, Count Skrzynsky,

M. Caillaux, M. Paul Boncour, M. Loucheur, gave interviews to the Press, travelled all night to Geneva, took part in the exacting preliminary conversations at Geneva on the Sunday (March 7th), travelled back to Paris throughout Sunday night (March 7th–8th), had a full and exacting day in Paris on Monday (March 8th) while party meetings were being held and the President was interviewing possible Prime Ministers, gave a farewell luncheon to his outgoing Cabinet on Tuesday (March 9th), was himself invited by M. Doumergue to form a Cabinet that same afternoon (4 p.m.), succeeded in forming it after ten hours' continuous effort—thereby breaking the record for quick Cabinet-making—took his list to the President at 2 a.m. (March 10th), held a first meeting of the new Cabinet that same morning, and left by the evening train again for Geneva, reaching Geneva the next morning (Thursday, March 11th). Since the previous Friday, therefore, he had been through four crises domestic and foreign, had resigned, formed a new Government, had spent three of the six nights in the train, and a fourth in the Chamber of Deputies. Young and healthy men might envy such stamina.

M. Briand's contribution to post-war progress has been a matter of manner rather than of substance, although in the progress towards settled peace the distinction between manner and substance may often be illusory. He often disagreed with Mr. Lloyd George —about reparations, for instance, and Upper Silesia—but always contrived to disagree in a friendly spirit and to leave no sting behind.

One of his minor gifts is that of saying the appropriate thing gracefully and effectively on big occasions, especially on occasions when some pacific event is consummated. Two instances may be recalled.

The Locarno treaties were signed in London on December 1st, 1926, and the opportunity was taken by the statesmen for some realistic talk about the future. There was much to talk about. It had not been an easy thing for Dr. Luther and Herr Stresemann to come to London for the signing ceremony, for German opinion was still puzzled about some of the implications of the Locarno pact. M. Briand was involved in an acute financial crisis. None the less, December 1st successfully clinched what had been done on October 16th.

In the ceremony itself there was little of interest beyond the fact that M. Briand, for all the distraction from which he was suffering, rose most distinctively to the occasion. The six signatories spoke twice, once before the signing, once after; and although they had enough dramatic sense to realise that anything beyond the shortest speeches would be intolerable, the arithmetic tiresomeness remained that twelve speeches of an average duration of four minutes took three-quarters of an hour. What M. Briand chiefly did to dissipate the threatening boredom was to quote from an anonymous letter he had received: "Allow a mother of a family to congratulate you. At last I shall be able to look at my children without apprehension, and to love them with some security." What better tribute to the work that had been done? There was in it, moreover, a moral for the diplomatists. Diplomatists must be conditioned by the public opinion of the world. An opportunity such as that afforded by Locarno could be fully taken only if public opinion were roused. M. Briand shares with Mr. Lloyd George the ability to make men and women in the mass take an interest in diplomacy—in the work, that is, on which their security mainly depends. M. Briand's short quotation from the unknown mother

made a greater impression throughout the world than all the rest of the ceremonial proceedings put together.

To those of us who were looking on at the proceedings nothing could have been more dramatic than M. Briand's succeeding passages, his eyes fixed on the German delegates as he delivered them. "Opposite me," he said, with a wave of the hand, "sit the German delegates. That does not mean that I do not remain a good Frenchman, just as they remain, I am sure, good Germans; but in the light of these treaties we are Europeans only. By our signatures we declare for peace. The particularism of our countries is blotted out by this agreement, and with it vanish unpleasant memories. If the Locarno Agreements . . . are not the draft of the constitution of a European family within the orbit of the League of Nations they would be frail indeed. . . ." Herr Stresemann, speaking with impressive emotion, followed M. Briand in the like strain. Here at last the diplomatists of the three chief countries which had committed the atrocity of the Great War—France, Germany and Great Britain—sat facing each other in an apparently repentant spirit, and it was M. Briand who set the tone.

The second occasion was the signature of the "Kellogg" Pact, which was in origin at least a "Briand" pact. The origin, it must be confessed, belied the event, for in June 1927 M. Briand submitted to the American Ambassador in Paris, for transmission to Mr. Kellogg, the draft of a proposed treaty entitled "Draft of Pact of Perpetual Friendship between France and the United States." There were, no doubt, minor motives in M. Briand's mind, as there often are minor as well as major motives in the closely-woven fabric of French diplomacy, but his main motive was to obtain from the United States an undertaking never to go to war in any

circumstances whatever against France. That was an excellent experiment on M. Briand's part. It was simple and straightforward. If accepted, it would make arbitration the final and only method of quarrel between the two countries.

M. Briand became more difficult when his bilateral idea was transformed by Mr. Kellogg into a multilateral idea; but when the transformed Pact was signed at the Quai d'Orsay on August 27th, 1928, M. Briand, sublimely adaptable, was seen to be at the height of his form, as he had been at Cannes, at Genoa, at Locarno. The signing ceremony itself lasted exactly an hour, from 3 to 4 p.m., of which three-quarters of an hour were taken up by M. Briand's speech. "For the first time," he said, "in face of the whole world, through a solemn covenant involving the honour of great nations, all of whom have behind them a heavy past of political conflicts, war is renounced unreservedly as an instrument of national policy, that is to say, in its most specific and dreaded form: selfish and wilful war. . . . There is not one nation represented here which has not shed its blood on the battlefields of the last war. I submit that we should dedicate to the dead, to all the dead of the Great War, the event we are about to consecrate with our signature." Could any politician in Europe have put the point more neatly or with more dignity?

M. Briand is a brilliant orator; but there is one story that deserves to be scored against his oratorical record. In the summer of 1926, when the French Chamber was still refusing to ratify the debt-funding arrangement made by M. Caillaux with Mr. Churchill the summer before, M. Briand made a speech in the Chamber in the course of which he said, "It is the duty of a great country to look clearly ahead when it subscribes to such

solemn engagements (*i.e.* debt fundings) because it intends to be punctual in their execution." The word "punctual" was a glorious touch, for the debt had been contracted eleven years earlier, and even the funding arrangement, still unratified, was a year old. And now (1929) three more years had passed, and the arrangement had only just been ratified! From the British point of view, however, it was never too late for France to be punctual in this matter.

M. Briand is an agreeable figure in European affairs. He has done many things which the world has cause to be grateful for, and has probably on the whole been as pacifist in motive and in effect as any contemporary statesman. Except for the few years when his influence was eclipsed by M. Poincaré, he has had an almost consistently restraining effect on French policy. Even M. Briand, however, is a Frenchman, and a clever Frenchman; and he has behind him the constant pressure of the permanent officials of the Quai d'Orsay. There is a difference between the departmental atmosphere of the London Foreign Office and of the Quai d'Orsay. The permanent officials in London deal day by day with delicate difficulties created all over the world where the British Empire touches other countries. Day by day they need tact, patience, finesse, to prevent an outbreak of unpleasantness somewhere or other. Restraint has become a habit with them, and peace an aspiration. Their normal influence on the Secretary of State, whether he may need such an influence or not, is sedative. It would be a long search to find a body of men as reasonable, pacific, broad-minded and soothing as the permanent officials of the British Foreign Office. By contrast the Quai d'Orsay contains a compact, localised, restless, quick-witted body of diplomatic speculators,

with whom the excitement of the day is a necessity of their being. A quiescent Minister of Foreign Affairs, such as normally is M. Briand, would goad them to madness if it were not that they admire the unexpected subtleties of his own French mind. The point, however, is that whenever M. Briand has pursued a pacifist policy in affairs, he has done so in spite of, not because of, his permanent officials; and although history shows that he has sometimes fallen into the traps set for him by those officials, his record is remarkably pacific. The difficulties aforesaid make the achievement all the more honourable.

§ 3. M. Poincaré

M. Poincaré's timidity peeps from his eyes. His beard and his moustache cut short any further speculation at first sight. His legal training made him obstinate (as timid people often are), but hardly logical. The loss by France of Alsace-Lorraine when he was a boy of eleven, seemed to implant in his mind (he must have been a sensitive child) an *idée fixe* which ruled his conduct ever after—the idea of getting something back from Germany. His general history as President of the French Republic, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, Minister of Education lacks interest in comparison with his overshadowing history as an enemy of Germany. When before the war he introduced the Three Years Military Service Law, cultivated the so-called Entente Cordiale with England, and made a Naval Agreement with Russia, he had one object in view, namely, the strengthening of France against the contingency of war with Germany. One does not forget his provocation by a Germany which had no more sense than to annex Alsace-Lorraine; but two blacks do not

make a white, and M. Poincaré's fear, or, which is the same thing, his hatred of Germany was without doubt one of the contributory factors to the tragedy of the Great War. No irredenta, however broadly based upon historical and ethnographical ground, can excuse the incalculably greater evil of war; and the fear which goes to the making of war is itself a crime.

The war came, M. Poincaré got his military victory, his paper reparation debt. He probably reached, or thought he had reached, the height of his satisfaction on New Year's Day, 1923, when he decided to send his armies into the Ruhr. For four years he had struggled against Mr. Lloyd George and M. Briand, always coveting what he called a *mainmise* over Germany, as a means of making Germany pay and making her incapable of paying at one and the same time. In August 1922 Mr. Lloyd George had at last been driven to open disagreement with him. At the end of the same year Mr. Bonar Law found it impossible to interest him in any constructive scheme whatever, and having found that he had not even read the British memoranda, Mr. Bonar Law returned from Paris to London with the knowledge that M. Poincaré was about to "occupy" the Ruhr.

At least one French newspaper understood M. Poincaré's dilemma. *L'Œuvre* at the beginning of 1923 published a cartoon in which M. Poincaré was represented as saying to the French public, "And now we must go to Parliament for money." "What for?" asks the public. "To make Germany pay," answers M. Poincaré.

M. Poincaré's ambition to make Germany pay, and to refuse all French payments to the creditors of France in the meantime, and his attempt to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds in the Near East, led him into

some highly original situations during the five years immediately following the war. Superficial observers thought him rigid, on the strength presumably of his rigid hatred of Germany and his rigid refusal ever to entertain pacific thought. In all other respects his instability of outlook and inconsistency of argument have been outstanding features of his character. After displacing M. Briand during the Cannes Conference of January 1922, M. Poincaré fought against the holding of the Genoa Conference, on the ground that the method of conference was the wrong method. What was wanted, he submitted, was a return to the pre-war method of diplomatic interchange between the several Governments by means of written Notes, carefully drawn up and recorded, so that any particular problem could be dealt with step by step, the steps being carefully recorded and admitting of no possibility of misunderstanding. That was the line he took with Mr. Lloyd George. When Mr. Baldwin, in June 1923, addressed to him a written series of questions and asked for a written answer, M. Poincaré answered that the method of putting things in writing was the wrong method, and that what was wanted was a personal conference between himself and Mr. Baldwin so as to discuss matters orally. In successive years he enunciated two flatly contradictory principles of high diplomacy.

Nor is M. Poincaré a proud man. On the evening of May 24th, 1923, he resigned, and M. Millerand refused to accept his resignation. The crisis arose out of the occupation of the Ruhr, for the French Communists, headed by M. Marcel Cachin, deputy in the Chamber for the Seine, took a strong line against the Government's policy. It happened that four months earlier M. Cachin, M. Monmousseau, and eighteen

other French Communists had been arrested in the Ruhr, and since that time had all been imprisoned in accordance with the French system of preventive detention. The trial had been postponed because M. Poincaré wanted to make a big parade of punishment so as to stamp out, if possible, the French Communist opposition to the occupation of the Ruhr. It was due to M. Poincaré's personal wish that the case was referred to the Special Committee of the Senate, a body corresponding to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Great Britain. By obtaining a verdict against the Communists in the highest French Council of Law, M. Poincaré hoped to prevent any further Communist trouble. The Senate Committee considered the case (May 24th, 1923), and decided that it was not competent to pass sentence in a matter of that kind. In other words, the decision was that there was no reason why the case should not be tried before the ordinary assizes. In the Senate's view it was not exceptionally important. M. Poincaré, differing from the Senate on juridical grounds, and, what to him was more important, taking its decision as a personal rebuff, petulantly sent in his resignation to M. Millerand.

M. Millerand patiently pointed out that the Senate's decision did not imply lack of confidence in the Government, but only a difference of interpretation in law, and he therefore saw no ground for accepting the resignation. The affair had some incidental interest as showing how deep was M. Poincaré's hold over French nerves. When he sent in his resignation, Frenchmen of every shade, except those of the extreme Left, took stock of the position, and came to the conclusion that their confidence in M. Poincaré was still unshaken, the only alternative to him in the Prime Ministership being at the moment

M. Loucheur. Now M. Loucheur is primarily a business man, and no business man could in his heart approve the bull-in-a-china-shop heroics of the French army in the Ruhr. He was known, therefore, to be not too sympathetic to the Ruhr policy, although, like an ordinary Frenchman, he supported it. As, therefore, French prestige was engaged in the Ruhr, the general French opinion was that M. Poincaré should see the matter through. It was pointed out to him that he need not take the Senate rebuff as anything but a technical rebuff, and that he need not persist in his resignation. His pride was as easily satisfied as it had been unnecessarily wounded, and he did not persist.

It has been a feature of M. Poincaré's post-war history that his fears have sometimes lent themselves to Pickwickian treatment. M. Millerand's treatment in 1923 was Pickwickian. Similarly, during the five months September 1928 to February 1929, when M. Poincaré found it hard to reconcile himself to the holding of the Young reparation inquiry, but found it easy by one device or another to prevent its meeting during that period, one particular anxiety that worried him was allayed in a simple and pleasant manner. He had demanded that the experts be appointed, not by the Governments of the six Powers, of whom Germany was one, but by the Reparation Commission, on which Germany was not represented. The United States, in common with the other parties concerned, demanded that they be appointed by the Governments. It was therefore arranged that the Reparation Commission should " appoint " the members nominated by the Governments. M. Poincaré was happy, and all was well.

M. Poincaré, however, shows no deviation from the type of subtlety that characterises French political

finesse. Whatever may be said of French diplomacy on a long view, of its inability to form or to sustain constructive ideals, there can be no questioning its lightning agility at close range, or the *flair* with which it can make the most of a sudden opportunity. In 1923 M. Poincaré took advantage of the Corfu crisis to bombard Mr. Baldwin with requests for a personal meeting. Mr. Baldwin passed through Paris on September 19th, 1923, held his famous after-luncheon interview with M. Poincaré, and hot from the oven, as it were, an official *communiqué* was issued which took London by surprise. It asserted that " on no question is there any difference of purpose or divergence of principle which could impair the co-operation of the two countries." Mr. Baldwin had been innocently trapped into creating a second Entente Cordiale. He was acclaimed in Paris, amid the lyrical chorus of the French Press, as a second Edward VII. The " second Edward VII " duly returned to London and relapsed into a silence as sepulchral as the Entente Cordiale itself, while General Degoutte " mopped up " (to use an ugly, but fairly descriptive, military expression) the remnants of passive resistance in the Ruhr. As might have been expected, French policy after the famous meeting ran on exactly the same lines as before, Great Britain stood politely aside and Germany crashed.

M. Poincaré showed himself to be not without cunning, and Mr. Baldwin fell an easy victim. Flushed, no doubt, with his success, M. Poincaré next tried to stampede the same victim into another *faux pas ;* but Mr. Baldwin was twice shy. When M. Poincaré had won his second victory over Germany (this time a defenceless, unarmed Germany) he realised that the victory would have to be paid for, and he had successfully made

it impossible for the Ruhr to pay. M. Poincaré does not like paying for victory; he especially did not like it in this case, when he had promised the French taxpayers that his victory would ease their burdens. What he thereupon devised was typical of his cunning mind. Diplomatic staff work was at once set in motion in the Quai d'Orsay, and the rumour was sedulously spread from Paris that the British Government, by virtue of the humanitarian sentiments which always characterised it, had decided to save Germany from ruin by undertaking to back an international loan for Germany. That report found its way into the British Press as an item of "news," purporting to record an actual decision taken by the British Government. There was no truth in it, and the kite flew back harmlessly to Paris. M. Poincaré thereupon dropped the idea of making the Ruhr pay via London. The somewhat Machiavellian basis of M. Poincaré's calculation was that it had been a common stipulation in all the proposed schemes for such a German loan, that a percentage of the proceeds should be earmarked for an immediate discharge of Germany's reparations liability. Fifty-two per cent. of it therefore, by virtue of the Spa percentages, would go to Paris; perhaps even more than 52 per cent., because at the same time the Quai d'Orsay was ventilating a claim for a revision of the Spa percentages in favour of France. London gold, so ran M. Poincaré's dream, would flow through Berlin to Paris.

The Ruhr episode added two further curiosities to M. Poincaré's record. Although he thought of the Ruhr by day, dreamt of it, no doubt, by night, and regularly spoke of it every Sunday, he never entered the Ruhr himself during the period of the occupation. He travelled several times to his native Bar-le-Duc, but

never found it in his heart to cross the frontier. The second curiosity was that he persisted, against all discouragement from Brussels, in hitching Belgium to France in all his diplomatic dialectics *vis-à-vis* Great Britain. At the beginning of the Ruhr occupation he had exploited the suggestive association of ideas by always referring to the occupation as an "Allied" occupation. Since British policy (before Mr. Baldwin innocently ruined it) forced him reluctantly to drop that epithet, he clung to "Franco-Belgian" as a substitute, not only to describe the occupation, but to describe the enlarged province of French reparations policy and French feeling in general. M. Poincaré, however, in this matter had little luck.

Towards the end of 1923 M. Poincaré's diplomacy excelled even its former record for muddle and self-contradiction. By an official communication of October 29th of that year, he demanded an expert reparation investigation restricted to the question of "Germany's present capacity to pay." Yet in a Note to the British Government of August 20th (only two months earlier) he had declared: "Germany's present capacity to pay corresponds to zero, as a result of the Reich's own will. All expert inquiry would be useless."

M. Poincaré's arithmetic is hardly less shaky than his logic, his memory and his imagination. The self-contradictory figures of his Notes about German reparation and the French share thereof (especially his 1923 dossier on that subject) are a museum of harmless amusement for morbid mathematicians. The myth of M. Poincaré's juridical mind could be riddled with many instances. He has often claimed to take his stand on the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Yet, for instance, his insistence on restricting the expert committee's terms of

reference would have the effect of nullifying that part of the Treaty (Part VIII, Annex 2, particularly clauses 9, 11, 12 and 12*b*) which gave the Reparation Commission the fullest latitude to appoint such a committee with the widest reference.

It would be tiresome to spin the full tale of M. Poincaré's unhappy vagaries in the triangular relationship of Western Europe. His political tragedy is that since the war his intellectual qualities have been vitiated by the obsession of his destructive purpose towards Germany. In another field of politics, that of finance, he has something good to his name. The success with which in 1927 he stabilised the franc served only to illustrate the moral that his qualities of steadfastness and persistence would be capable of big achievement if bent on constructive ends, but encompass only confusion when turned to destructive ends. The phenomenon is true enough to life.

§ 4. M. Herriot

Edouard Herriot, sometime Prime Minister of France (1924), and later President of the Chamber, is a rough diamond in appearance, in style and in content. The son of a poor army officer, he first made his living as a secondary schoolmaster, but devoted his main energy the while to the production of some good treatises on French literature. He had his first taste of politics as Mayor of Lyons (1905), where his new broom swept exceeding clean. He carried social reforms, improved the administration of the Town Council and of the public finances. He made a reputation as a Socialist politician which during the war carried him to Cabinet rank. M. Briand made him Minister of Labour, Traffic and

M. HERRIOT

Supplies (1916). He was one of M. Briand's chief allies in the post-war struggle against M. Poincaré, was largely responsible for the French recognition of Soviet Russia and the French acceptance of the Dawes Plan. By a singular coincidence, he reached the Prime Ministership for the first time in the same year (1924) as Mr. MacDonald's first Prime Ministership in England, and the two worked harmoniously to produce the Dawes Plan.

When in 1924 M. Herriot adopted a Franco-Belgian plan for the military evacuation of the Ruhr, he received a letter from (of all people) M. Léon Blum, the leader of the French Socialists, threatening to withdraw the support of the Socialist Party, if M. Herriot agreed to evacuate the Ruhr without obtaining some solid compensation! The Prime Ministership of France is an embarrassing job.

§ 5. M. Loucheur

Louis Loucheur is the Stinnes of France, modified by his political digressions. Born in 1872 and educated at the École Polytechnique in Paris, he made an early and meteoric success as a builder, operating in a wide international scope. Then came the war. He joined the army as an artillery officer, but a few months after the war began, M. Millerand, then War Minister in the French Cabinet, gave him the work of organising the manufacture of war material. He did the work so efficiently that at the end of 1916 M. Briand asked him to join his second Cabinet as Under-Secretary of State for Munitions. M. Loucheur thereupon gave up his private business, and became a full-time politician. He became Minister of Munitions in the Cabinet of M. Ribot, who succeeded

M. LOUCHEUR

(From a drawing by M. Noël Dorville)

M. Briand, and held the same post under M. Painlevé and M. Clemenceau. At one time he was M. Clemenceau's closest colleague. After the war he became, first Minister of Reconstruction and then Minister for the Liberated Territory.

He went with M. Briand to nearly all the international conferences in 1920 and 1921, was a warm supporter of the Briand policies, and shared with his chief the intensive vicissitudes of those two crowded years. The effect produced on him and on M. Briand by the stress of those years illustrated the difference in the temperaments of the two men. I remember being in the hall of the Carlton Hotel at Cannes on the occasion when, at the beginning of 1922, M. Briand was defeated in the Chamber, the reason for his defeat, as some Frenchmen in Cannes honestly believed, being the levity of his golf match with Mr. Lloyd George. The news of the defeat came by telephone. M. Briand met it without a ripple of emotion on his face. He announced it to some friends with the same hang-dog expression and listlessness of tone that always characterised his casual conversation; but M. Loucheur pranced about, threw up his hands, ejaculating, "We have resigned! We have resigned!" He made no attempt to control his emotion. M. Briand probably did not feel any emotion.

M. Loucheur has cut a vague and somewhat ragged figure as an industrial politician. He has sympathised with M. Briand's pacific purposes, but has confused with them certain attempts at original deals in the diplomacy of reparation calculated to serve the single interests of France without much regard for the interests of the other parties concerned. His famous negotiations with Herr Rathenau, the German Minister of Reconstruction, at Wiesbaden in the autumn of 1922, were of

that type. It was unpleasantly left for Lord (then Sir John) Bradbury in the Reparation Commission to kill the Wiesbaden Agreement by pointing out that France could not by direct negotiation with Germany assign to herself additional reparation benefits at the expense of her "allies." The conception itself was a little crude, and M. Loucheur thereby showed himself to be something less than a first-class diplomatist.

Even his political principle became a little confused in outline, for after associating himself with the policies of M. Briand, he accepted the portfolio of Trade, Industry, Post, Telegraph and Telephone Affairs in a reshuffled Poincaré Cabinet (March 1924). That Cabinet was short-lived, but the point is that the effect of M. Poincaré and of M. Briand respectively on the economic reconstruction of Europe (in which matter M. Loucheur may be presumed to take a particular interest) is diametrically different, and it is not clear how M. Loucheur, on a long view, could in his own mind reconcile the two.

§ 6. M. Barthou

M. Louis Barthou (*b.* 1862) is more distinguished for his literary and legal than for his political work. He is much too sensitive and brittle a man to withstand the fixed ideas of M. Poincaré: as witness the occasion when in 1922 M. Barthou went to Genoa, and was reduced by M. Poincaré into insignificance from the beginning to the end of the conference. M. Poincaré had not wanted the conference to be held, and when it was held, sent M. Barthou as his lieutenant; but the lieutenant was kept at the Genoa end of the Paris telephone, with the result that he appeared to his fellow delegates in the various Genoa palaces as a tongue-tied enigma.

§ 7. M. Millerand

Alexandre Millerand in his turn has had little chance of influencing French policy, because his more cultured and more humane mind has stood little chance against M. Poincaré. He no less than M. Poincaré has been President of the Republic, and has held a variety of Ministerial posts. In addition, he has a brilliant record to his name as a barrister. He is kind, sensible and statesmanlike: a lovable man. French politics, however, in the post-war period, could not benefit much from the possession of such a man.

§ 8. A French Political Crisis

Crises in French politics are commonplace; but the way they have of working themselves out is peculiarly interesting. It is as though a crisis in Paris is something perfected by experience, something in which skill, finesse and tradition have combined to produce a national accomplishment. It would not be surprising if Frenchmen were secretly proud of their political crises. They can hardly be proud of their parliamentary traditions, as anyone will agree who has heard a sitting of the French Chamber during a debate on an emotional subject. I remember hearing such a debate when General Sarrail's conduct at Damascus (1925) was the subject. M. Herriot was President of the Chamber, General Sarrail himself sat in the gallery. During most of the time members were on their feet shouting at each other and at General Sarrail; M. Herriot was on his feet making more noise than anybody by thumping his baton on the table and shouting "Order! Order!" like any private schoolmaster who cannot keep order.

By contrast a French Ministerial or constitutional crisis is a thing to admire. A detailed example of such a crisis is here given to show the delicacy of the technique involved. It was in the summer of 1924, when the majority of the French politicians, having rid themselves for a season of M. Poincaré, the Prime Minister, next aspired, with less wisdom, to rid themselves also of their President, M. Millerand. In French politics there are certain conventions, too rigid to be broken openly, but assailable by indirect methods when national feeling is roused against them. The Presidency of M. Millerand was a case in point. The letter of the Constitution gave him a seven years' run. The Cartel des Gauches, which had succeeded at the elections in putting an end to the Prime Ministership of M. Poincaré, was equally dissatisfied with the Presidency of M. Millerand, and equally determined that he, too, should go. It is interesting to notice exactly how they set about it.

In the first place, the Left advertised the clearness with which in the voting of May 11th it had won the support of the electorate. Excluding the 31 Communists returned, the Left counted 140 Radicals and Radical Socialists, 35 Republican Socialists, 103 Unified Socialists and 132 Left Republicans—in all 410 votes. Methodically and carefully, therefore, the Left leaders worked out a plan of action. First, M. Poincaré should make way for a Ministry of the Left. Second, an attempt should be made to secure the eventual participation of the Unified Socialists in that Ministry. Third, M. Millerand should resign from the Presidency.

The first step in the programme proved easy. There was no conceivable resource of logic or constitutional *finesse* behind which a Prime Minister who had lost his majority could shelter, and M. Poincaré promptly

announced his intention of resigning, and did resign, on June 1st.

The second step proved more difficult even than was at first expected. The Unified Socialist Party at once split on the issue. Led by MM. Paul-Boncour and Varenne, one section of it burnt its boats and declared for participation. Another section, led by MM. Léon Blum, Renaudel, and Paul Faure, insisted on an independent policy. The first-named leaders argued that half a loaf was more than no bread, and that by accepting a share of power in a Left coalition they could at any rate secure some of the reforms for which the party stood. The three leaders on the other side argued that a dilution of Government would make impossible any consistent or effective attempt at purely Socialist legislation. While the issue was being fought, the Unified Socialist Party was sedulously courted on the one side by the Radical and Radical-Socialist group of M. Herriot, on the other by the Communists. M. Herriot on May 31st wrote a personal letter to M. Léon Blum, appealing for Socialist collaboration.

"The verdict of May 11th," he wrote, "revealed in the clearest manner the country's desire for a new policy both at home and abroad, to be founded resolutely on the principles and methods of democracy. At home what is wanted is a vigorous reaffirmation of the republican spirit, and the carrying out of social reforms in an atmosphere of confidence shared by the workers. In foreign policy the need of constructive peace dominates all other issues. The electoral victory which has made this programme possible was won by close collaboration between the Socialists and the Radicals. Together they defeated the coalition of money and lies. It was a common triumph. . . . The people have done their

duty. It remains for us to do ours. In the name of my party, therefore, I appeal for the complete support of the Socialist Party. We are ready to discuss with your party the means and conditions of a joint administration in a loyal, fraternal and, I assure you, a perfectly disinterested spirit."

The Communist Party similarly wrote, but (in conformity with the traditions of Communism) at much greater length, to solicit the Socialist vote and to outline its policy. The interesting points in the programme were, according to that statement, the evacuation of the Ruhr, opposition to the Dawes scheme, the payment of the costs of the war by Franco-German capitalists, and the nationalisation of all the vital industries, including the mines and the banks.

An extraordinary congress of the Socialist Party was held on June 1st and 2nd, which exultingly sat in judgment on the rival claimants for its benevolence. Just as Tsarism in Russia produced Bolshevism, and as Count Tisza produced Béla Kun in Hungary, so M. Poincaré made Léon Blum the virtual dictator in French politics. The simple swing of the pendulum is as true a principle in politics as in a grandfather's clock. The French Socialist Congress on June 1st asked M. Herriot to submit a programme, detailed enough and drastic enough to justify the Socialists, if not in joining his Administration, at any rate in supporting him. On the following day, therefore, M. Herriot sent to the Congress a full statement of Radical and Radical-Socialist policy. It comprised certain domestic reforms; a general amnesty except for rebels and traitors; the suppression of the embassy at the Vatican; a reduction of military service; budgetary and fiscal reform, and a greater reliance on direct taxation. The most interesting part

of the statement was that which dealt with foreign policy.

"We are determined," he wrote, "to achieve peace through an understanding with the various peoples. That peace, for which we shall work with all our ardour, cannot, in our opinion, be won until France, faithful to her democratic mission and to the engagements which she entered into during the war, has strengthened and enlarged the *rôle* of the League of Nations and other international institutions such as the Hague Tribunal and the International Labour Office. The League of Nations itself will never be able to do what we expect of it, nor to prevent the horrors of war, until it comprises all nations which are resolved to respect its authority.

"We wish to re-establish normal relations with Russia.

"We accept without any *arrière pensée* the report of the experts [*i.e.* the Dawes Report on reparation].

"Our party has combated the policy of isolation and of force which has led to territorial occupations and to the seizure of territorial pledges. In view, however, of the present state of Germany, we are faced with the necessity of shielding, not only France, but every other country, against a resumed offensive of Nationalist Pan-germanism, and our party therefore deems it impossible to evacuate the Ruhr until the pledges prescribed by the experts have been put into force and confided for their future application to the international organisations which are qualified to apply them. We also think that, in the interests of peace, it will be necessary to assure the control of German disarmament by common Allied action, and at the earliest possible moment by action on the part of the League of Nations. We shall have to solve the problems of security by means of pacts of

guarantee contracted under the authority of the League of Nations."

Two points will be chiefly noticed in the above statement. M. Herriot lost his first opportunity of saying the right thing about Germany, and he maintained by implication the Poincaré policy of regional understandings with an anti-German bias.

The Socialist Congress on June 2nd considered the statements both of the Socialist Party and of the Radical and Radical-Socialist Party. A series of resolutions were passed, the net result of which was to reserve to the party its complete independence of action in the Chamber, to refuse M. Herriot's suggestion for Ministerial co-operation, but to promise the party's support in so far as the programme might suit their purposes.

The third step in the Radical plan of action—that of bringing retribution to the occupant of the Elysée—brought with it a good illustration of the way they do things in Paris. When M. Poincaré was President of the Republic he wrote a book called "How France is Governed" (1913), in which he explained with admirable lucidity the constitutional practice of France. One contingency which he failed to deal with in his chapter on the President was precisely that which now confronted M. Millerand, and so confronted him because his Presidency was contaminated by M. Poincaré's own Prime Ministership. "That the President should not be called upon," wrote M. Poincaré in his book, "to account for the ordinary conduct of public affairs, that he should not be personally harassed by the Chambers, that his independence should be protected—all this is very desirable. But what if he should violate the laws? What if he should rebel against the Constitution? What if, like Prince Napoleon on December 2nd, 1851, he

should effect a *coup d'état?*" The author answered his own questions by showing that the President is liable to impeachment before the Senate for such contingencies of treason. But what if the President of the Republic identifies himself with such a policy as that of M. Poincaré, and if an election, falling within the period of the President's office, condemns such policy? It would have been piquant to have M. Poincaré's view of such an emergency. There is no hard or fast rule laid down in the Constitution about it, and therefore the French crisis had to be further complicated by the necessity of a full and logical establishment of a precedent.

What happened exactly was as follows: On June 1st, when M. Poincaré resigned, the deputies of the Radical, Radical-Socialist, Republican-Socialist and Socialist Parties assembled in their several headquarters and passed resolutions which agreed with each other in denouncing M. Millerand's continuance in the office of President. On the same afternoon 307 representatives of the Cartel des Gauches met at the Palais d'Orsay and passed a unanimous resolution thus: "Considering that M. Alexandre Millerand, President of the Republic, has, in conflict with the spirit of the Constitution, pursued a National policy; considering that he has openly taken sides with the Bloc National; and considering that the policy of the Bloc National has been condemned by the country; the Cartel is of opinion that the continuance of M. Millerand at the Elysée would injure the Republican conscience, would be the source of incessant conflict between the Government and the Head of the State and a constant danger to the *régime* itself."

The twenty-six Communist deputies, who, in conformity with their party's decision as recorded above,

did not take part in the mass meeting of the parties of the Left, passed a resolution of their own to the like effect.

M. Millerand, however, refused to resign, and put his refusal down to his respect for the Constitution. Literally he was in the right; but as one French opinion put it with charming force: "M. Millerand at the present moment has been dismissed; and one who has been dismissed has no alternative but to hand in his resignation!" M. Millerand took a long and round-about course, steering by the letter of the Constitution. His seven years of office had not expired. He therefore called on M. Herriot, as the political leader who had won the biggest following at the elections, to form a Government. M. Herriot correctly went to the Elysée to receive the invitation, and equally correctly refused it on the ground of M. Millerand's conduct. M. Millerand was therefore faced with the alternatives of resigning at once or of inviting another party leader to form a Government. When a cock is made to walk the chalked line his cruel obsession is imposed by others. M. Millerand's chalked line was of his own chalking, and he walked the whole length of it, or, as we shall see, nearly the whole length of it, by his own choice. He knew that it could lead only to one end, but determined to go through with it in the grim manner. Unable to find any Left politician willing to accept at his hands the honour of forming a Government, he decided to call on M. François Marsal, who had been Minister of Finance in the Poincaré Ministry. M. Marsal accepted, and carried out the farce in all its detail. He appointed his Cabinet, and his colleagues accepted their appointments although everyone knew that it was to be an empty mockery of a few hours' duration. M. Maginot was

made phantom Minister of War, and M. Lefebre du Prey phantom Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On Tuesday, June 10th, M. Marsal and his ceremonial puppets faced the Chamber. The Chamber passed a resolution adjourning itself indefinitely until such time as a Ministry appeared before it which represented a majority. The voting on that occasion was 329 for the resolution, 214 against, the Government of the day—literally of the day—being thus defeated at the outset by 115 votes. The Senate passed a similar resolution. A message from M. Millerand was then read in both Chambers. It was completely divorced from reality; and its emptiness produced a pantomime such as could never be enacted at Westminster. In the course of his message M. Millerand declared:—

"The Constitution, in the national interest, has fixed the term of the Presidential office at seven years, and lays down that the President of the Republic is not responsible to Parliament except in the case of high treason.

"Gentlemen, you who are members of the Senate or the Chamber will respect the Constitution. If you disregard it, if it were to be understood henceforward that the arbitrary judgment of a majority could compel the President of the Republic to resign for political reasons, the President of the Republic would be nothing more than a plaything in the hands of the parties. You will help me to combat so grave a danger.

"I have refused to desert my post, and it is not for Parliament, whose mandate it is to vote the laws and to enforce respect for them, to set an example of violation of those laws. The Senate, faithful to its traditions, will remain as it has always been, in the gravest crises a defender of the Constitution. A constitutional question

of such importance for the future of the Republican *régime* as that which is raised in the present crisis cannot be settled in the dark by the decisions of individuals or of parties. I appeal confidently to the wisdom of both Chambers, to their prudence, and to their love of France and the Republic."

What was the meaning of the word "confidently" in the last sentence, must remain a mystery; for M. Millerand knew as well as any of those who heard his appeal that it was his swan song. In the evening of the same day he issued from the Elysée a statement in which he thanked M. Marsal and his colleagues "for the help which they had given him in defence of the Constitution." Logically there was one last ditch still left for M. Millerand to rally in, but, weary no doubt of the hollow history he was enacting, he chose not to try it. He could have dissolved the Chamber. That, however, would have brought only a respite, and a further refinement to the farce. Instead, he formally announced his resignation in a letter which was read to both Chambers on the following day (Wednesday, June 11th). By that time he had apparently lost interest in his position and had become laconic. "M. le Président (he wrote), I have the honour to place on the table of the Senate my resignation as President of the French Republic. Please accept, etc. Alexandre Millerand." On June 13th the National Assembly met at Versailles to elect M. Millerand's successor. "It is at Versailles," wrote M. Poincaré in the book referred to above, "in a wing of the magnificent *château* erected by Louis XIV. that this election takes place. Let us enter the vast courtyard, separated from the Place d'Armes by a golden grille. We are surrounded by statues of marble which evoke all the ancient glories of France: Richelieu, Bayard,

Colbert, Tourville, Duguay-Trouin, Turenne, Du Gueschin, Sully, Condé. . . ."

The voting at Versailles led to the appointment of M. Gaston Doumergue, who received 515 votes against M. Painlevé's 309. Both those candidates belonged in sympathy to the Left, but the scale was turned in favour of M. Doumergue by the vote of the Right, who acted, as one of them said, on the principle that cholera was better than the plague. As M. Painlevé was M. Herriot's candidate, his defeat was naturally hailed in the Paris papers of the Right as a defeat for M. Herriot and as an illustration of M. Herriot's essentially weak position. It soon became clear, however, that M. Herriot had no intention of taking it amiss, for on the evening of the following day he had his Cabinet list ready to present to M. Doumergue. It was, indeed, arguable that the Versailles verdict was the most expedient in the prevailing circumstances. M. Millerand came to grief precisely because he was too closely identified with the Prime Minister of the day. A President too palpably *persona grata* to a Left Prime Minister might have courted the same risk. Any criticism of the Right on such lines was made impossible in this case by the fact that it was the Right vote which decided the issue. M. Doumergue had the further qualification of a reserved, moderate and genial temperament. In Paris the explosive potentialities of a situation in which the Government of the day had no working majority were an ever-present menace to any consistent efforts in European diplomacy. M. Doumergue was precisely the President who by a judicious mixture of constitutional good form and personal disinterestedness might be able to minimise the danger of explosion.

§ 9. Charles Maurras

The activities of the French Right tend more and more to be concentrated in the movement known as the Action Française. The case of its leader, M. Maurras, deserves to be studied both from the religious and from the international points of view. He has had prolonged political influence in France, he has bewildered the Roman Catholics of more than one country for a whole generation, and has the distinction of having drawn the formal displeasure of two Popes.

Charles Maurras was bred a Roman Catholic. Being endowed with a singular reluctance to think constructively or positively about anything, but with a torrential facility for negative and destructive propaganda, he first of all gave up religion and became an atheist. He then decided to be for ever restless in political propaganda based exclusively on two simple, but not magnificent ideas: namely, first, that France must be top dog and Germany bottom dog in an unending dog fight; second, that in order to encompass that end France must be freed from Republicanism and democracy, and must revert to Monarchist Royalism.

Not a subtle conception; yet by a certain freak of cause and effect he produced something subtle. The rich aristocrats of France are Roman Catholic in religion and Royalist in politics. The Roman Church in France is poor, and its dependence upon the rich Monarchists opened out to the ruthless vision of M. Maurras a prospect in which, because he did not see straight, he himself saw neither humour nor inconsistency. He had the frankness, or the lack of imagination, to maintain his atheist contempt of Roman Catholicism while extolling the order, discipline and authority of the Roman Church.

The poor priests of France, drawn by the purse-strings of the rich aristocrats, who in their turn were drawn by the militarism of M. Maurras, became involved in the paradox of enlisting themselves as disciples behind a frank antagonist of Christianity and of all religion.

Pope Pius X. before the war decided to place Maurras and his works upon the Index, but suspended action because there was some formal difficulty in condemning one who was ostensibly concerned only with politics. Logically it was the Roman priests of France who ought to have been condemned for their heresy in adoring an anti-Christian.

The unleavened heaviness of the Action Française, its unimaginative atheism, its militant Nationalism, its wooden compact with rich Romans are unattractive things. Yet M. Maurras attracted adulation. The students of Louvain University voted him the greatest living philosopher. Jacques Bainville—a good writer—fell under his influence, although the influence gradually weakened.

The main interest of M. Maurras's activities attaches, it is true, to his political consequences. M. Briand was propagated by him quite simply as a traitor to France because he wanted to have peace with Germany, not war. Now it is clear from two points of view that the Vatican was thereby placed in a dilemma. In the first place, there are Roman Catholics in Germany as well as in France. In the second place, peace on earth, goodwill towards men are of the essence of the Christian creed. If, therefore, M. Maurras thought to mobilise his Roman apostles in an unholy crusade against M. Briand merely because M. Briand advocated peace and goodwill, he was stretching the paradox a little too far.

He provoked an immediate reaction. In his 1927

New Year's Speech at the Elysée Mgr. Maglione enthusiastically extolled M. Briand's peace policy, as exemplified by the Locarno Treaties, and promised the co-operation of the Holy See. Then the Congregation of the Holy See condemned the works of M. Maurras and of his Royalist paper, *L'Action Française*. For the first time since MM. Daudet and Maurras began performing, the anti-Clerical Left in France found itself wholly in agreement with the Holy See, whereas the French Roman Catholics were confounded and confused between their political allegiance to Maurras and their religious allegiance to Rome. When M. Maurras, nettled by his own mismanagement of his Roman followers, lost his head and incontinently attacked the Vatican as a "pro-German" agency merely because it had condemned himself, then the matter was finally reduced to the absurdity it ought to have produced many years before.

§ 10. French Financial Politicians

The story of what the French financiers have done since the war would fill many volumes, and each would be as entertaining as the others. In Paris, finance tends to be subjective, rather than objective, and that tendency probably explains why it violates most of the rules of good finance. The only reason why France does not suffer therefrom is that she is a self-supporting country, and her financial credit is of minor importance to her. Her virtual repudiation of the bulk of her war debts has done her little harm. Even Russia has suffered more from the like default. Such repudiation would ruin Great Britain, dependent as she is on international finance and international trade for her livelihood. Since

the war the French Finance Ministers, with the exception of M. Caillaux (who takes a certain objective view and is correspondingly unpopular in France), have regarded the foreign debts of France mainly as a bargaining lever in her diplomacy about military security. The story cannot be told here; but a few episodes will show how the French differ from (say) the British political financiers.

One of the best stories of all post-war finance is credited to the name of M. Clémentel, French Finance Minister in 1925. It gives an example of the way in which currency problems can prove too much for those who are not expert in the business. It throws some indirect light on the general difficulty of dealing with a country which hardly understands the credit aspect of money, accomplished though she be in certain of the technicalities of money matters. M. Clémentel, whose strong point was not his understanding of currency problems, hit on a highly original scheme. The scheme was this. In order to avoid further inflation, he decided to withdraw the French currency from the Saar territory and to circulate it in France, and then to replace it in the Saar by a special Saar currency. That scheme, according to M. Clémentel's calculation, would increase the currency circulation in France without the issue of further currency. What he apparently did not recognise was that his scheme was just as much an act of inflation as if he had issued more notes, for inflation is calculated on the relation of currency to population. By withdrawing the currency from the Saar, he maintained the same total currency but decreased the number of people using it—which was the same thing, in effect, as increasing the currency.

Facts are treated as of minor importance in nearly all French financial argument. In the years following Mr.

Baldwin's funding of the debt to the United States it became a commonplace of French comment to blame British precipitance as the root cause of the post-war financial troubles of the whole world. An interesting, forgotten chapter of history therefore deserves to be reopened. On January 28th, 1925, M. Loucheur recalled that it was France who had been the first to take separate action in the matter of Allied debts to the United States. The incident to which he referred took place a few years earlier. It was in June 1922, when the Allied bankers had unsuccessfully attempted to arrange for an international loan for Germany, that M. Poincaré decided to send a feeler to the United States. His object was to discover whether the United States Government would give correspondingly lighter terms and a corresponding reduction of her indebtedness, if France agreed to a reduction of Germany's total indebtedness.

At the beginning of July, therefore (not in May, as M. Loucheur stated), M. Parmentier, a junior official of the French Finance Ministry, was sent on a mission to Washington to discuss the funding of the French debt to America. At that time the French Government was convinced that it would be easy to represent French difficulties over the reconstruction of the devastated regions in such a way that America would readily agree to specially favourable terms for a French settlement of her debt to America. M. Parmentier, however, was unpleasantly surprised when he got to Washington to find himself subjected to a close examination by the Debt Funding Commission on the details of French military expenditure for herself and for others, and on the remarkable lightness of the taxes which the French peasant had to bear. It was therefore given out that he was returning to Paris to consult his Government, although

the French Press at the time made it clear that his mission was regarded in Paris as having failed. That interpretation was made clearer in the autumn, when the French Funding Commission declined to cross to America when Mr. Baldwin went, although it had been arranged before M. Parmentier's July visit that the two Commissions should leave together in the autumn.

The British Balfour Note was sent to France just after M. Parmentier's mission in Washington had failed, and there is little doubt that it was partly due to French separate action in Washington. At that time, however, no one in London took seriously any French move towards the funding of any debt, and M. Parmentier's visit to Washington attracted little attention, especially as the Genoa Conference had just ended, and was regarded as much more interesting. Before M. Parmentier went to Washington there was, it is true, a general understanding between France and Great Britain that no separate steps should be taken by either of them in matters affecting reparations, inter-Allied debts, or any other questions of common interest to both. That understanding was violated by France in many spheres besides that of debts, but that of debts was regarded as of the least importance, because if M. Parmentier had obtained good terms from Washington it would have been difficult for Washington to insist on heavier terms from Great Britain. None the less, it is surprising that British commentators should have so far forgotten the Parmentier incident as not to use it as an argument against the French attacks on the separate British agreement with America, and that it should have been left to M. Loucheur to recall it.

Even the way in which the French Ministry of Finance keeps its books and fills in budget details illumines the

apparently unconquerable French aversion from realistic finance. One may take a random example. Soon after the terms of the Anglo-Italian debt settlement were announced in 1926, French commentators began to draw morals. M. Klotz, a former French Finance Minister, and M. Pietri, another high official, revealed certain gems of their thought. M. Pietri complained that the amount of the French debt, as recorded in the books of the British Treasury, was swelled by the inclusion of the profits made on French purchases and by the excess profits tax paid by the sellers. It was a somewhat naïve argument. What had happened was that France was granted credits for the purchase of goods. Naturally the price paid for the goods was the ordinary market price, which, equally naturally, included the seller's profit. The fact that the seller paid a tax to the Government out of that profit is a condition of all sales of goods, French as well as British. The surprising statement of M. Klotz was still more difficult to understand. "We borrowed from Great Britain," he said, "£1,200,000,000, and we have paid back £850,000,000; we therefore owe her only £350,000,000 if the interest were not taken into account." The best way to explain what underlay that statement is this: France borrowed, say, £100 by presenting Treasury Bills of twelve months' duration to the face value of £105. That is to say, France, in return for having received £100 at the beginning of the period, promised to pay £100 plus 5 per cent. interest—namely, £105—at the end of the period. In this case France did not pay either the £105 or anything at all. The British Treasury therefore, as it did not want to expose France as a defaulter to her own bond, extended the period. At the expiry of the twelve months' period the British Treasury said in effect: "You owe £105;

we will accept another batch of Treasury Bills of the actual value of £105 and of the face value of £105 plus 5 per cent., to be paid at the end of the next twelve months." France, therefore, deposited a second batch of Treasury Bills of the face value of a little over £110, technically cancelling the first £105. That is what M. Klotz meant by "paying back"! His figures, which were mere paper points representing an extension of the time limit, were, moreover, several years out of date, as he must have known. If he had doubled all his figures they would have been nearer the mark. M. Klotz's final remark, "If the interest were not taken into account . . . ," baffled any explanation. M. Klotz knew all about Treasury Bills. He knew that France presented those Treasury Bills, and that the whole point of Treasury Bills is their initial discount. Either M. Klotz regarded his public in France as totally ignorant of the A B C of public finance; or was completely indifferent to his own reputation; or had been completely misreported in the French Press.

M. Klotz's figures were merely a rehash of the way in which accounts are recorded in the French Ministry of Finance. The official French statement of the position in regard to the British debt, drawn up annually, consists of four columns. In the first is given the year, in the second the number of bills issued, in the third the number of bills "redeemed," in the fourth the "balance." The figures start with 1915, and each of the three columns giving the figures is added up. The "redeemed" bills, of course, are merely bills cancelled by the issue of new bills to take their place, that operation being necessitated precisely because the bills were not redeemed. To add up the number of unredeemed bills for which new bills were issued and to represent the

total as the amount "redeemed" or "paid back," is an achievement of financial book-keeping which perhaps serves its purpose as well as the simpler British practice of recording the only total that matters—namely, the amount of the unpaid debt—but when a former Finance Minister quotes the paper figures and leaves his reader to infer that those figures represent money paid he baffles comment. On the later unhappy history of M. Klotz one need not dwell. In 1926 he was as sane as any Frenchman on financial matters.

By an even more striking lack of realism, it has been the practice of the French Government in drawing up its budget to regard as a definite revenue receipt the prospective year's reparation annuity from Germany. No British budget ever regards as a receipt anything except a receipt—that is, a sum actually received before the date of the Budget. Estimates and established facts are rigorously differentiated.

It is not in the least inconsistent that throughout the post-war period the French political financiers have blown hot and blown cold over one and the same topic, according to the exigency of the moment. One of the most remarkable contrasts is that whereas, on the subject of debt repayment, France represented herself as nothing more nor less than one huge devastated district, yet at the same time, on the subject of further borrowing, she developed an exactly opposite conception of herself. In November 1924, when the Morgan loan of 100,000,000 dollars was raised for France in New York, M. Clémentel, the French Finance Minister, wrote part of the prospectus in the form of a letter of some thousand words, the burden of which was to prove the security of the loan by reason precisely of the flourishing financial and economic state of France. He gave tables showing that

the excess of expenditure over revenue had been reduced from 23,759,000,000 francs in 1919 to 4,183,000,000 francs in 1924. He described the tables as showing "in a striking way the progressive betterment of the budgetary situation." He also said: "The receipt by France of her share of these payments (*i.e.*, the Dawes annuities) will enable the Government to accelerate the execution of its programme of full financial rehabilitation and to proceed to the more rapid amortisation of the public debt." The adjective "more rapid" is noteworthy, as applied to something which had not yet started to move.

M. Clémentel elaborated his points. "France has turned (he wrote) to the intense development of her foreign trade. This effort has been most successful. . . . The recent development of France's export trade is in large measure due to the return to productivity of the great industrial centres devastated during the war. For example, the average monthly production of coal, exclusive to Alsace-Lorraine, which in 1919 had declined to 48·5 per cent. of the 1913 production, has reached during the first nine months of the current year 96 per cent. of the 1913 monthly average. The output of iron ore, excluding the important production of Alsace-Lorraine, has more than doubled since the conclusion of peace. Similar progress has been made in the finished steel, textile and chemical industries." As for the devastated regions, "of the area rendered unfit for cultivation as a result of war damage, which at the time of the Armistice covered 8,150,000 acres, all but 815,000 acres had been restored to productivity." Would that anything like such an achievement had been made in the reconstruction of the devastated provinces of British trade! "Great progress," ended M. Clémentel, "has been made in reconstruction, industrial productivity and foreign trade."

Such was the rosy picture of French devastation and its recovery as presented by the French Government in 1924, when it wanted a loan from the United States. Concurrently, in presenting what ought to have been the same picture to Germany for the purpose of assessing Germany's reparation liability, the state of devastation got progressively worse, not better. The French politicians, in fact, started a sort of auction sale (in Marks) of the value to France of her devastation. Even M. Poincaré was outbid. He had put the figure at the equivalent of £850,000,000. His Minister of Public Works in 1928 put it at £960,000,000 by adding accrued interest and an estimate of what was due to be added by the difference in the value of money in 1928 and in 1919. Speaking as chairman of an investment trust company in London on June 11th, 1929, Sir George Touche remarked: "If there were no politicians in the world, the outlook would be clearer, and our hope would be surer."

§ 11. A French Financial Contrast

(i) M. Caillaux

M. Caillaux is the nearest approach to a true political financier that can be discerned in present-day France. He is regarded by his countrymen as the French Bradbury, but most Frenchmen qualify the analogy by the axiom that no financier can be the equal of Lord Bradbury; for was it not Lord Bradbury who at one and the same time fought the case for leniency towards Germany, made Germany pay when France could not extract anything, and, moreover, made Germany pay more to the British Treasury than to the French?

M. Caillaux, however, is regarded both in London and in Paris as a stiff financier who is more likely than any other Frenchman to extract the payment of taxes from the French peasant, no easy task. He holds more conventional views about debts than is usual in France; and a French wit diagnosed his dilemma by observing that under M. Caillaux's guidance France would no doubt fund her external debts, but would hardly go to the length of refunding them.

M. Caillaux bravely attempted to make France pay her debts; but he did not succeed. On August 23rd, 1925, he came to London to see Mr. Churchill, his purpose being to fund the debt to Great Britain, it being his further purpose to sail for Washington three weeks later on a like mission. All he did was to draw up in London a draft agreement which nearly four years later was still unratified. M. Caillaux was confident enough about the prospect when he met Mr. Churchill on August 24th, 1925. He declared after the meeting that it would be "the bankruptcy of human common sense" if two such countries as Great Britain and France, which had fought together in the war, could not agree on a point of finance. On the evening of the second day his buoyancy had gone. I saw him that evening and asked him if an agreement had been reached. His sense of humour (which is well developed) came to his rescue, and throwing up his hands with his characteristic vivacity he exclaimed: "There shall be no agreement! There are new proposals which I take to my people for them to consider. We have been talking, only talking. I am something of a financial expert myself, but not quite an expert, and we have simply been continuing our attempts to understand each other's point of view."

He spoke English, which he speaks well—having

M. CAILLAUX

learnt it as a child—but not, of course, perfectly. When he said there was to be no agreement, what he presumably meant was that there had been no question of reaching a definite funding agreement, but merely of another exchange of views. It would perhaps have been mischievous to have recalled his own words of the night before, when he said that his failure to reach agreement would be the bankruptcy of common sense. There was, too, a less buoyant optimism of tone in M. Caillaux's piano protestation on the second night, when, in a somewhat defenceless spirit, he declared: "Politicians must be optimists or they are useless."

(ii) M. FINALY

M. Horace Finaly is a Paris banker about whom most Frenchmen have something to say, although few of them say the same thing about him. His manner is provocative, and he makes enemies by his dictatorial ways. He is phenomenally rich. He had the agility, the imagination and the farsightedness to exploit the financial opportunities of the post-war period before most of his potential competitors saw the opportunity; but, though the means to his end be riches, he is not simply a miser hoarding money for its own sake. What he likes is the power that money brings.

It is interesting to observe that, in contrast to the prominent bankers of other countries, whose outlook tends to be genuinely international, M. Finaly's international outlook has been bounded and decided by the policies of the Quai d'Orsay. He has given no help to any international scheme of reconstruction except in so far as it happened to suit the diplomatic purposes of France. He has aimed at securing for France the raw

materials and natural products of the countries with which France is politically allied. He created three banks for that purpose, the Banque Nationale Française du Commerce Extérieur, the Banque Franco-Polonaise, and the Banque Franco-Espagnole. He made a close liaison with banking interests in Rumania, was a staunch advocate of a Rumanian stabilisation loan, and secured a big French influence in the Banque Ottomane by buying its shares in large quantities.

In no other country in Europe has a prominent banker so closely identified himself with the passing expediencies of his Government's diplomacy abroad.

CHAPTER THREE: GERMANY

§ 1. The New Conditions

THE political play of personalities in German politics centres in the Reichstag, whose 493 members are now elected by a full franchise. A scheme of proportional representation under which all men and women who have reached the age of 20 are qualified to vote has been in force since April 1920. The Chancellor of the Reich corresponds to the British Prime Minister, and his office depends upon the confidence of the Reichstag. The constitution is republican. The President, who is elected by the direct vote of the electorate, has considerably less power than the Kaiser had in pre-war days, as will be made clear in the section below on Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. Prussia is no longer a predominant factor in the Reich, the eighteen constituent states being organised as a federation and conducted on advanced democratic principles. Bavaria, it is true, has not been conspicuously content or even loyal to the new constitution, but on the whole it has worked well. Since the war the German politicians, civil servants and diplomatists, in common with the whole German people, have worked even harder than they normally work. Adversity left them no alternative. Germany lost all her foreign capital during the war; she has lost markets, colonies and other general resources; all her citizens lost their private capital in the 1923 inflation. In 1924 Germany was wholly destitute, and had to begin building again from the foundations. The peculiar grimness of the German character enabled them to set about it in a matter-of-fact spirit. Even the highest officials of the German Foreign Office keep daily office hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and they are typical of all classes except the

bedrock working classes. The old "idle rich" have ceased to be rich, and have therefore ceased to be idle. It has not been an unmixed disaster.

The adverse circumstances of post-war German politics have undoubtedly been responsible for the chastened, subdued spirit which has characterised her politicians and leading personalities at home and abroad. Herr Stresemann, President von Hindenburg—even von Hindenburg—have presented a restrained front to their colleagues at home and to their neighbours abroad. That spirit offers something of a contrast to the pre-war spirit of German politics.

In Berlin, as in Paris, the party system, when contrasted with the simplicity of the British system, is complicated and demoralised. There are about a dozen political parties, which form themselves into three main groups, the Right, the Centre and the Left. The Right bloc is composed of four parties, of which the two chief are the Deutschnazionale Volkspartei (German National People's Party) and the Deutsche Volkspartei (German People's Party). The first was returned to the Reichstag in the 1928 election with 78 members, the second with 45. The leader of the German People's Party is Herr Stresemann, of whom a personal sketch is given in a succeeding section. The Centre bloc counts some half-dozen parties, of which by far the biggest is the Deutsche Zentrumspartei (German Centre Party), represented in the Reichstag after the 1928 election by 61 members. The Chairman of the party is Dr. Marx, who became Chancellor of the Reich for the third time in 1926. The Left bloc, which is made up of three parties, contains the biggest single party in German politics, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (the Social Democratic Party of Germany). That party was returned

to the Reichstag with 153 members in the 1928 election. One of the party directors is Dr. Hermann Müller, a former Chancellor and Foreign Minister, who again became Chancellor as a result of the 1928 election. One of the leaders of the party in the Reichstag is Dr. Breitscheid, who is also one of the most capable and interesting of the rising German politicians.

The German banks are more intimately concerned in German industry than are the British banks in British industry, for whereas the British banks advance loans to industries against security, the German banks are big holders of industrial stocks. Circumstances have also given the German banks an unusual influence in post-war politics, as will be illustrated in the section below which deals with Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichsbank.

§ 2. Herr Stresemann *

Herr Stresemann's lot has been a hard one. The settled melancholy of his expression is a true record of what he has done, felt and suffered. He has all his life been identified with good causes, and such men receive many of the kicks and few of the halfpennies.

Born in 1878, he started his career as an industrialist. He helped to found the Association of Saxon Manufacturers, the most powerful industrial organisation in Germany; he was in himself a big factor in the remarkable phenomenon of the pre-war German economic prosperity; and he had the vision and the courage before the war to remove spontaneously many of the grievances which the German workers, acting through their trade unions, were developing against the employers. His level-headed humanity, combined with his organising

* This was written before Herr Stresemann's death.

ability and industrial "drive," had already made for him a big reputation in Germany before he extended his scope to include politics. When he entered the Reichstag in 1907 he soon showed that to his other qualities was added that of a good orator, who combined soundness of matter with just the effective veneer of oratorical presentation. By the time, in 1918, that Germany's outlook appeared to be most desperate, Herr Stresemann had consolidated his reputation in and out of parliament, and the people instinctively turned to him for comfort. He founded the People's Party, representative of the aspirations of the whole middle classes, and inspired such confidence that when the still greater catastrophe, the collapse of the Mark, fell in the summer of 1923, he was called on to undertake the dual responsibility of Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs. It was a crippling responsibility, and he bore it. He played his part, by magnificent steadfastness, in saving Germany.

To be the Foreign Minister of a defeated Power, when one of the victors—France—attempts to perpetuate the rôles of victor and vanquished, is in itself a severe trial of statesmanship. It would have been easy for Herr Stresemann to yield to the resentment and spirit of revenge prevalent among the extreme German Nationalists, or to abandon himself to the self-pity felt by so many Germans, and expressed in the spirit of the typical German ballad. He deliberately chose not to confine his purpose to the immediate difficulty of Germany, but to combine with it the idea of European reconciliation.

He has had his difficulties increased by the obstruction of the Quai d'Orsay, acquiesced in for the most part by Whitehall. He has had behind him the obstruction of the German Nationalists, who have lost no opportunity of pointing out that his policy of appeasement towards

France and Great Britain has not softened the hearts of the victors. Yet he has stuck to his ideal. Probably no statesman in post-war Europe has had so difficult a thing to do. Herr Stresemann has proved his mettle as a true statesman. He has done so in spite of the still further difficulty of personal bad health.

His great ambition centred in the Locarno treaties. He worked magnificently towards their successful negotiation, and his work was an indispensable contributory cause of the success. He worked still harder to make the treaties live up to their purpose in the after event, but Paris and London—even London, in spite of Sir Austen Chamberlain's initial pride in the treaties—slipped back and forsook the Locarno spirit.

When the Locarno treaties were signed (December 1st, 1925), Herr Stresemann's sincerity and his anxiety were alike unmistakable. Speaking at the ceremony he said: "The greatest loss which we suffer is that a generation has gone down of whom we do not know how many undeveloped forces and possibilities, how much spirit, genius, energy and determination (*Geist, Genie, Tat- und Willenskraft*) would have come to fruition if they could have lived out their lives." Then he added: "A community of fate binds us to one another. If we go under, we go under together. If we would rise, we cannot do so in conflict with each other, but only by working together."

Taken at their face value, the Locarno treaties restored normal diplomatic equality between ex-allies and ex-enemies. By an auspicious convention adopted during the negotiations and ceremonies, the words "allies" and "enemies" were never uttered on either side. To German minds, especially to Herr Stresemann's enemies at home, the test of the sincerity of the Locarno idea

would be the evacuation of the Rhinelands. What all Germans said was in effect something like this: "If Great Britain and France genuinely feel what they say, if they regard Germany as an equal and as a friend, why do they not at once evacuate German territory?" Dr. Luther, who was Herr Stresemann's colleague at the Locarno ceremony, indicated in his public speech what was in his mind. "Everything must disappear," he said, "which has its causes in the after effects, now no longer justified, of the war period. The fact that districts of my Fatherland have to suffer still longer from the consequences of that war must within a reasonable period also belong to the past, as also the feelings of distrust which we desire mutually to renounce. The plough to which we wish to put our hands must create new values, must give to a free soil the possibility of the harvest which our people need after their long sufferings. . . ."

Herr Stresemann waited patiently for several years after the Locarno Treaty came into operation for France and Great Britain to live up to their ideal by evacuating the Rhinelands. He waited in vain. Only a man of Dr. Stresemann's power could have kept German resentment within bounds for so long.

§ 3. Herr Schacht

Herr Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, has a highly developed sense of humour which seems to go well with his bizarre physique. There are two types of male physical ugliness, one of them repellant, the other attractive. Germany is a highly productive country in that field, and her production touches the two extremes. She produces beautiful things, but she also

specialises in a type of bald plump male ugliness which is not attractive. Dr. Schacht's ugliness (as Herr Stresemann's) is of the other type, and is partly artificial. His face would attract less notice if he did not wear ill-fitting and probably uncomfortable pince-nez and a remarkably high collar, which he always puts on the wrong way out. He is a little unusual to look at, but his eyes twinkle when he sees the funny side of his hard lot as a financier. He often sees the funny side, although a less tough spirit would be beaten by the desperate situation he has had to handle.

When American bankers, lacking in tact, said to him (in effect): "If you want to know what banking is you should come to New York, where we handle more millions than the rest of the world put together," Dr. Schacht answered (it happened to be just after the 1923 smash): "Any fool could be a successful banker if he had more millions to handle than the rest of the world put together. If you want to know what banking is, come to Berlin, where we have to bank on nothing."

Dr. Schacht is certainly entitled to talk about banking on bedrock. It was the German crash of 1923 that first brought his name into the limelight. In July 1923 there were 1783 printing presses, running in 133 offices, and some thirty paper mills working day and night to produce the notes needed to keep pace with the collapse of the Mark. In November 1923 Dr. Schacht accepted the post of Imperial Currency Commissioner, and began the heroic task of stemming the issue of notes. It was found that he would be helpless unless he also controlled the Reichsbank; but he was an untried man, and most of the bankers, with whom precedent and an established reputation are apt to be decisive criteria, were opposed to Dr. Schacht's succeeding to the Presidency of the bank.

The Wilhelmstrasse and the Reichsbank, however, agreed to appoint Dr. Schacht. At that moment the Mark, instead of standing at 20 to the £, was wildly fluctuating above the unimaginable figure of 150,000,000,000 to the £. In other words, the Mark had broken loose from reality. Dr. Schacht, who had from his youth made a study of English finance (he obtained his Doctorate of Laws by a thesis on "The Theoretic Contents of English Mercantilism"), took the immediate step of consulting Mr. Montagu Norman, Director of the Bank of England. Mr. Norman promised the credit of the Bank of England to back the gold bank Dr. Schacht proposed to set up in Berlin. From that foundation Dr. Schacht built steadily. He reformed the Reichsbank. He rescued Germany from the brink of the abyss.

Dr. Schacht has also been a powerful influence behind German diplomacy. When M. Briand met Herr Stresemann at Thoiry on September 17th, 1926, and obtained Herr Stresemann's provisional consent to an unpromising politico-financial *coup*, of which the central idea was to mobilise capital for France by selling Dawes railway bonds, Herr Schacht quietly waited till Herr Stresemann returned to Berlin, and then, equally quietly, but swiftly, killed the project by the simple ruling that it was unpractical. Herr Schacht did not temper the wind when presented with so lame a project as that of selling large quantities of railway bonds when the only markets would be London and New York, and when the result of the operation would be to sacrifice the interests precisely of London and New York for the exclusive benefit of Paris. The result was that for some days Herr Schacht and Herr Stresemann were hardly on speaking terms.

So far, however, as the diplomatic aspect of the Thoiry

conversations was concerned, Herr Schacht's sense of humour came to his rescue. I went to see him at the Reichsbank in Berlin just after the Briand–Stresemann conversations took place. By way of comment he told me a story. Some twenty-five years ago, he said, there was formed in Berlin a Colonial Club. No Colonials attended it; but the meetings were held regularly. The members sat round a table. Suspended from the ceiling and poised over the centre of the table was an illuminated board bearing the inscription " Es muss was geschehen ! " (" Something must be done about it ! "). I gathered that he had gone to the Wilhelmstrasse, and said (in effect) to Herr von Schubert, in reference to the Thoiry idea : " Es muss was geschehen." Time proved that the irony in the case of Thoiry was as good as it had been in the case of the Colonial Club.

In spite, however, of his sense of humour Herr Schacht is not remarkably tactful. Oddly enough, for all their polished courtesy, the German people are somewhat lacking in tact, and Herr Schacht is not an exception. He has been known, in discussing matters with an English banker, to quote the Mark exchange in terms of dollars ; and in conversation with an Englishman who speaks English to ask him in the course of small talk when he is returning to New York. In other words, merely because German financial thought was focussed on New York, German simplicity did not even see the need of differentiating between two peoples whose language, in its broad syntax, was the same ; and German simplicity did not see that an Englishman might thereby be taken by surprise. The reason why New York loomed large was put to me by Herr Schacht, who said : " I cannot walk past the Adlon Hotel without an American running out and offering to finance something."

§ 4. Herr Duisberg

Dr. Duisberg is one of the most powerful of the German industrialists. He was the leader of the German team that went to Romsey in 1926 to discuss with Sir Robert Horne and other British industrialists the idea of an "economic Locarno." His great chemical works at Leverkusen near Cologne are world famous for their prodigious size (the central avenue through the works is over a mile long) and for their epoch-making inventions, such as that of aspirin and of the explosives which prolonged the World War from 1915 (when the existing supplies ran out and raw materials were cut off) to 1918. By 1926 Dr. Duisberg had become a pacifist, as had all serious people who had not reached wisdom before. When M. Poincaré sent his French bayonets into the Ruhr in 1923 Dr. Duisberg was banished to his own cellar, where he lived for fifteen months in three rooms, and was not allowed to use his own front door. His private mansion at Leverkusen and his offices in the chemical works were occupied by "enemy" officers. The memory of those fifteen months and of their indignities weighs heavily on Dr. Duisberg; but he is the foremost advocate in Germany of an understanding with France. The experience of the French occupation of the Ruhr, synchronising with the collapse of the Mark during the inflation period, when the entire internal capital of Germany, private and industrial, was destroyed, was such as to knock the nonsense, if any, out of any human being. Whether or not Dr. Duisberg ever had in him more nonsense than the average European during the years 1914 to 1918, he became in the post-war years one of the most chastened advocates of peace in Europe.

Dr. Duisberg is typical of the first-class business man whose influence in affairs is so much more healthy than that of even first-class politicians. I went to see him at his chemical works near Cologne at the time when the "Romsey" idea was being discussed. His statesman-like outlook was more impressive than that of many of Europe's leading politicians with whom I have discussed European problems. At about the same time I discussed such topics as Thoiry, Locarno, European reconstruction with many representative Germans, including the Chancellor, high Foreign Office officials, members of the Reichstag, as well as big industrialists. The industrialists were much more serious, but unfortunately less influential, than the politicians. Dr. Duisberg is typical of the superiority of the business over the political mind.

As if to dot the i's of the contrast, it happened shortly after the Romsey meeting of the Anglo-German industrialists, and partly no doubt as a result of it, that a certain manifesto was issued by representative bankers and business men of Europe and America. It was issued on October 20th, 1926, and was signed by prominent business men, bankers and economists in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. The document was so good an illustration of industrial common sense and by implication so fair a criticism of the politicians that some of its sentences deserve to be reprinted.

"We desire, as business men (it ran), to draw attention to certain grave and disquieting conditions, which, in our judgment, are retarding the return to prosperity.

"It is difficult to view without dismay the extent

to which tariff barriers, special licences and prohibitions since the war have been allowed to interfere with international trade and to prevent it from flowing in its natural channels. At no period in recent history has freedom from such restrictions been more needed to enable traders to adapt themselves to new and difficult conditions. And at no period have impediments to trading been more perilously multiplied without a true appreciation of the economic consequences involved.

"The break-up of great political units in Europe dealt a heavy blow to international trade. Across large areas, in which the inhabitants had been allowed to exchange their products freely, a number of new frontiers were erected and jealously guarded by Customs barriers. Old markets disappeared. . . . To mark and defend these new frontiers in Europe, licences, tariffs and prohibitions were imposed, with results which experience shows already to have been unfortunate for all concerned. One State lost its supplies of cheap food, another its supplies of cheap manufactures. Industries suffered for want of coal, factories for want of raw materials. Behind the Customs barriers new local industries were started, with no real economic foundation, which could be kept alive in the face of competition only by raising the barriers still higher. Railway rates, dictated by political considerations, have made transit and freights difficult and costly. Prices have risen, artificial dearness has been created. Production as a whole has been diminished. Credit has contracted, and currencies have depreciated. Too many States, in pursuit of false ideals of national interest, have imperilled their own welfare and lost sight of the common interests of the world, by basing their commercial relations on the economic folly which treats all trading as a form of war.

"There can be no recovery in Europe till politicians in all territories, old and new, realise that trade is not war, but a process of exchange, that in time of peace our neighbours are our customers, and that their prosperity is a condition of our well-being. If we check their dealings, their power to pay their debts diminishes, and their power to purchase our goods is reduced. Restricted imports involve restricted exports, and no nation can afford to lose its export trade. Dependent as we all are upon imports and exports, and upon the processes of international exchange, we cannot view without grave concern a policy which means the impoverishment of Europe."

§ 5. Von Hindenburg in Mufti

When Field-Marshal von Hindenburg on May 11th, 1925, was goose-stepped into Berlin as President of the Republic, many people in Great Britain as well as in France became alarmed. Not believing that his election to the Presidency had been wholly due to the adoration of German females for uniforms, not having taken much interest in the German constitution during the Presidency of Dr. Ebert, and therefore not knowing exactly what influence the President could exert on foreign policy, those people suspected some dark manœuvre on the part of the German people. It was probably true that the persisting policy of "Vae victis!" pursued by France helped Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, Nationalist, to poll his 14,639,395 votes against the 13,752,642 cast for Dr. Marx, Republican; but it was not commonly understood by British or French opinion how much the post-war President's position differed from that of the pre-war Kaiser. An excellent definition of the difference is available in a ready-made form. In 1924, as a result

of a question put to the Government in the House of Commons, Mr. Ponsonby undertook to circularise all the British diplomatic representatives abroad to ask for a revised analysis of the methods adopted for dealing with international questions in the parliaments of the respective countries to which they were accredited. The answers of those representatives abroad were published in a White Paper (Cmd. 2282. Miscellaneous No. 19 (1924)). I quote the relevant passages in Lord D'Abernon's despatch, dated Berlin, August 18th, 1924:—

"The report on the treatment of international affairs in Germany furnished by Earl Granville on December 29th, 1911, is completely out of date in consequence of the German revolution and the adoption of the new Weimar Constitution.

"Since the passage into force of the Weimar Constitution promulgated on August 11th, 1919, sovereign powers are vested by the German people in the Reichstag and the President of the Reich elected by universal suffrage. The President in turn appoints the Government—that is to say, the Chancellor and the Ministers of the Reich—who must enjoy the confidence of the Reichstag during the exercise of their functions. . . . The President of the Reich is vested with the usual formal prerogatives which belong to the constitutional head of a State with Parliamentary government, but the declaration of war and conclusion of peace are effected by legislation in the Reichstag. He has the right to form the government as well as to exercise supreme command over the armed forces. He exercises certain rights of control *vis-à-vis* the Reichstag by virtue of the powers vested in him by the Constitution. He does not possess the right of veto on legislation. . . .

"Legislation dealing with foreign relations is, according to Article 6 of the Constitution, the exclusive prerogative of the Reich. Similarly Article 78 ordains that the care and conduct of relations between the Reich and foreign States lie exclusively in the hands of the Reich.

". . . Article 45 states that the President represents the Reich in international law. He accredits and receives diplomatic representatives. He concludes alliances and treaties with foreign States in the name of the Reich. His authority is limited in the sense that declarations of war or peace require legislation on the part of the Reichstag; similarly, treaties involving legislation for their fulfilment require the assent of the Reichstag. His ordinances require for their validity the counter-signature of the Chancellor or of the competent Minister of the Reich. The practical conduct of foreign affairs lies, of course, in the hands of the Foreign Minister, who controls the Executive and is directly responsible to the Reichstag. The Government are collectively entitled and obliged to lay down the general lines of foreign policy."

The position of the President to-day is therefore vitally different from the position of the Kaiser under the old Constitution. Article 11 of the old Constitution made the conduct of the entire foreign policy of the Reich the direct and exclusive prerogative of the Kaiser, whose executive organ was the Chancellor of the Reich. With the exception that the declaration of war, the conclusion of peace and the conclusion of the treaties needed the consent of the Federal Council or Bundesrat, the Kaiser was completely independent in his conduct of German foreign policy. The President of the Republic now replaces the Kaiser, but his influence and power

are incomparably smaller, for the practical conduct of foreign policy now rests with the Foreign Minister, and by Article 54 of the Weimar Constitution the Reichstag has the power of dismissing the Foreign Minister.

Hindenburg hates Socialists, and honestly believes that every Socialist carries bombs as a routine. It happens that he developed an intimate friendship with an official of the Wilhelmstrasse whose duty it was to see him every morning. One day the said official, knowing the President's views, thought it honest to confess that he was a Socialist. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, on receiving the information, first recoiled, then dismissed the matter with the words "Das glaube ich nicht!" ("I simply don't believe it!"), and resumed his friendly relationship.

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg is a well enough known figure throughout the world. To British people the associations of his name are the painful associations of war. Yet as President of the German Republic he has proved himself gentle, subdued and broad-minded.

§ 6. Dr. Marx

Dr. Wilhelm Marx, sometime German Chancellor, born in 1863 at Cologne, is the son of an elementary school head master. He sacrificed a successful legal career at the age of thirty-six to embark on politics. He has been a leading spirit of the Centre Party ever since, became Chairman of the party after the war, and was made Chancellor at the end of 1923. His peculiar quality is one that has served Germany's purposes well, and would serve any country well—namely, the negative quality of stolidity. It is hard to feel excited in the presence of Dr. Marx. He is a shock absorber, a con-

ductor of emotion. Once or twice he has been roused to the point of mild and dignified protest against the French appropriation of the Rhinelands, but has said remarkably little even on that provocative subject. In Berlin he has had the effect of calming passion. He gives the impression of having adopted as his political ideal the highly salutary and somewhat rare conception that the best politician is the one who does his best to suppress and discourage political controversy. He works quietly and constructively and talks little. I remember the pleasure with which he invited me to see him in the Chancellor's room in the Wilhelmstrasse and to discuss certain questions of the day. He spoke in soporifics, and left in me an abiding impression not of what he said, but of the man himself. I think of him as a calm, deep lagoon, pleasant, restful, with no problems. Oh for more such men in Europe!

§ 7. Herr Breitscheid

Dr. Breitscheid is one of the leading younger men in Germany, who is likely to be heard of in the future. He entered the Reichstag only in 1920, at the age of forty-six, as a member of the Social Democratic Party, but there are those who speak of him as a possible successor to Dr. Stresemann. In style he is like a Winchester and New College scholar. He speaks English well, and was once a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. I once had luncheon with him in the Reichstag, and vividly remember his grip of European conditions, his statesmanlike understanding of personal and national factors, his complete innocence of nationalist passion, his settled conviction that war is an unmixed evil and peace a blessing at any price.

DR. BREITSCHEID

CHAPTER FOUR: ITALY

§ 1. The Dictatorship

FASCIST Italy has probably produced more muddled comment, written, spoken and thought, than any other European phenomenon of our time. On the face of it there would be something to be said for Signor Mussolini if he had simply abolished party politics in Italy. Those who are most deeply provoked by the suppression of political freedom in Italy are not necessarily those who hold the most broadminded views of what freedom is. Only an anarchist is logically competent to denounce Signor Mussolini. A Socialist is the last person logically competent to do so, for a Socialist is one who on principle believes in the maximum control of the individual by the State; and, on the Socialist hypothesis, individual enterprise is of little importance. The humdrum Conservative, who on principle believes by contrast in the individual rather than in the State (except in time of war, when he virtually becomes a Socialist for the duration of the war), is in times of peace to some extent qualified to join issue with Signor Mussolini.

Such generalities, however, true as they may be, are not in themselves important. What is important is to gauge the practical effect of Fascismo on the everyday life of Italian men and women. Trams and trains may run on more businesslike principles; the country may be saved for the present from the unsettling effects of political uncertainty: but would any man of spirit choose in present conditions to live in Italy if he could live elsewhere?

Signor Mario Borsa, a fine journalist, the most tolerant and friendly of men, a patriotic Italian, could not work

under Fascismo. Professor Gaetano Salvemini, Professor of History at Florence University, an historian of European fame, was in effect hounded out of Italy because he refused to poison his teaching by giving to historic fact a Fascist complexion. He was imprisoned for a month without trial; he was threatened with "cold steel" by Fascist newspapers; he finally, taking the occasion of the amnesty granted by Rome after the Matteotti murders, escaped from Italy and lived in exile.

Yet Signor Mussolini, although he has several times been shot at, has maintained his grip on Italy, and has evolved a machinery of government; and there are those who consider that "there must be something in him," if only because he has in fact ruled a major European country almost single-handed for nearly a decade.

Italy, then, is one of the countries that have abolished parliamentary government. Signor Mussolini rules the Fascist Party, and the Fascist Party rules Italy. At the end of March 1929 a General Election was held in Italy. It was held on a Sunday. In prospect it shed no shadow over politics, finance or trade. Everybody knew in advance that the Chamber to be elected would consist not so much of a Fascist majority (for there would be no minority), but of a solid 100 per cent. Fascist legislature. It was a simple procedure. The electors were asked to confirm the deputies already designated by the Fascist Grand Council. They duly confirmed them, and the election was over, having been conducted without controversy and without disturbance. In dissolving the old Chamber Signor Mussolini superbly decreed that the purpose of the new election would merely be to "approve" the deputies designate. Nothing more. With equal sublimity, he explained to the masses, as he had explained before, that they were incapable of forming a will of their

own, and therefore of choosing between one man and another. There is something to be said for the *pax Mussolina*; but there is something also to be said on the other side.

The only political party that functions (if in such a case it can fairly be called a political party) is the Partito Nazionale Fascista (the National Fascist Party). All the other parties—the Popular, the Unitarian, the Republican, the Social Democratic, the Maximalist, the Communist, the Criolittian, the Peasant, and the Constitutional Liberal parties—have been abolished. The Press is one big party organ. The politicians and other leading persons, University professors such as Professor Salvemini, who temperamentally cannot submit to tyranny, are in exile. Italy is made of Mussolini and his henchmen.

§ 2. Signor Mussolini

The phenomenon of Mussolini, the Socialist son of a blacksmith, becoming the Dictator of Italy has been regarded by some people as an example of a political *volte face*. Yet it could be argued that it is nothing of the kind. A Socialist is one who wants the maximum of a nation's life to be dictated by "the State," who wants the minimum of personal freedom left to the individual. The Socialist who prefaces his experiment by the decree "L'état, c'est moi" and crushes all individual liberty in the name of that State, himself, is merely beating the Socialists at their own game.

Signor Mussolini is the most spectacular, and therefore the best known of the dictators. He entered upon his dictatorship like a lion, but has gradually become more lamblike with the progress of time. It is one of

the paradoxes of political fame that the better and the more successful a politician becomes the less he is heard of in the public Press. I remember in November 1922, just after his Fascist revolution had swept away the government of Signor Facta, Mussolini's outlook on life was that of a man who cracks his whip over his slaves, the slaves in this case being the people of the whole world. On November 22nd, 1922, I saw him at Lausanne soon after the Near Eastern Conference began. I asked him if he regarded the Dodecanese as a proper subject for discussion at the conference. "No," he said, "that question is settled." "Who by?" I asked. "By Italy," he answered. Arrogance of such a kind was typical of his outlook at that time. He was made worse by the women of Italy and of the neighbouring countries, who either admired or took a curious interest in his political "caveman" stuff. Whenever he entered his hotel at Lausanne a semi-circle of women were waiting inside the door to catch a glimpse of him. As he entered, he stood for a moment, struck a pose, glared round at the women full circle, and walked away with majestic disdain. His Napoleonic affectations at that time had the saving grace of an exaggerated self-consciousness.

At the beginning of his career as dictator of Italy Signor Mussolini's exuberance would indeed have been irritant if it had not been unfledged. On October 20th, 1922, he spoke at Udine on the thesis that Italy must be listened to by the nations of the world. "Italy's Ministers of Foreign Affairs," he said, "have been given a formidable card, and they must use it; the card is the Fascist Army. Italy will no longer carry out a policy of cowardly renunciation, whatever the cost." Four days later, at the Congress of Naples, he elaborated those sentiments by clamouring for the dissolution of Parlia-

ment, electoral reform, the "postponement" of the Italian evacuation of Dalmatia, which was due under the Treaty of Rapallo, and the reservation of five portfolios, those of Foreign Affairs, War, Navy, Labour and Public Works, for Fascist Ministers. The echoing approbation of the 30,000 Fascists who were present at the Congress had the effect of bringing down the Government, which resigned two days later. Giving himself up completely to the heroic form, Signor Mussolini decided to march on Rome, which he reached on October 30th; and the King, faithful to the modern practice of Continental monarchs, gave heed to the loudest noise and entrusted Signor Mussolini with the formation of a Government. True to himself, Signor Mussolini, in distributing his portfolios, kept three of them for himself—the Prime Ministership, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of the Interior—which together gave him the whole world, including Italy, for his field.

Initial opposition to his Government was crushed in a simple way. Several important newspapers, including the *Corriere della Sera*, were suppressed because they presumed to criticise Signor Mussolini, and a rigorous Government censorship was set up over all telegraphic communication. During November 1922 a docile Senate conferred dictatorial powers on him, to be exercised till the end of the year. At the outset of his term he announced that the motto of his foreign policy would be "niente per niente" (nothing for nothing), which meant that he was determined to vindicate at least Italy's equality with any other Power. On the eve of the Lausanne Conference he made his first bid for "equality" by a manœuvre which, no doubt, seemed odd to the more mature diplomacy of Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré. Those two had had a private exchange of views in Paris

over the prospects of the conference, but had assured Signor Mussolini that their decisions would be subject to his concurrence. That did not satisfy him, and he telegraphed from Lausanne inviting the two of them to come and see him. The telegram reached Lord Curzon just before he stepped into his train at the Gare de l'Est *en route* for Lausanne, and, as neither place nor time was specified in the invitation, Lord Curzon telegraphed a suggestion that Signor Mussolini and M. Poincaré should dine with himself that night (November 19th) at the Beau Rivage Hotel, Ouchy-Lausanne. Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré arrived at Lausanne (I happened to travel in the same train from Paris to Lausanne) just in time for dinner, and were informed that Signor Mussolini had gone to Territet, a small village some twenty miles away, where he waited the honour of their company. Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré had to re-entrain at once for Territet. Signor Mussolini had won his point, such as it was. In the exhilaration, no doubt, of the moment, Signor Mussolini summarily dismissed Lord Curzon's secretaries without reference to the noble Marquess.

One exception to the robust poverty of Signor Mussolini's foreign outlook in the early days of his administration was the studied moderation with which he spoke of Italian relations with Jugoslavia. The Santa Margarita Convention had been signed in Rome on October 23rd, 1922—exactly a week before Signor Mussolini marched into Rome. In the teeth of Nationalist opposition Signor Mussolini persuaded the Chamber to ratify the convention by February 6th. In accordance with that ratification, moreover, the Italian troops evacuated Sušak on March 3rd. Unfortunately, they continued in occupation of Porto Baros, a fact which led to the

breakdown of the Abbazia negotiations in the middle of April. In the resumed negotiations at Rome Signor Mussolini proved either unwilling or unable to withstand the Nationalist intransigence of his supporters, with the result that a crisis came to a head over Fiume in the second week of September.

Perhaps the most illuminating self-revelation made by Signor Mussolini was contained in a statement of his published in April 1923 in the Fascist review *Gerachia*, in which he said: "Men are perhaps tired of liberty. They have had an orgy of it. Liberty is no longer to-day the chaste and severe virgin for whom the generations of the first half of the last century fought and died. Other watchwords exercise a much greater fascination on the youth of to-day—order, hierarchy, discipline." Another illuminating sentence was: "Take away from the Government force—and by force I mean physical armed force—and leave it only its immortal principles, and that Government will be at the mercy of the first organised group resolved upon its destruction."

So far Signor Mussolini had been a striking success in home affairs, and as striking a failure in foreign affairs. His internal administrative reforms undoubtedly did good to Italy. He was able to carry them through by Fascist methods, both because the Italian temperament lends itself to such treatment and because he had a genuine and constructive desire to help his countrymen. His success at home perhaps spoilt him for his relations abroad, in which field he behaved like a peevish child, pouting because the world had not bowed down before his toy soldiers—but not as innocently as a child, for he had shown himself capable, as in the case of Corfu and Fiume, of doing harm.

Signor Mussolini's aggressiveness lasted well into

1926. When at the beginning of that year his attempt to Italianise South Tyrol drew a spirited public protest from Dr. Held, the Bavarian Prime Minister, Signor Mussolini was given an opening too tempting to be lost, for he had of late been rather quiet, and had even been to Locarno to sign a Peace Pact. Amends were clearly expected of him by those of his followers who looked to him for rough stuff. In a speech of February 6th, 1926, therefore, he took the whole of Germany, past, present and future, between his jaw-bones, tore the victim oratorically to bits, and smacked his lips. His peroration was superb. A certain provincial Fascist paper, he declared, had printed a six-column headline which ran " Fascist Italy will never furl her flags on the Brenner." Such an outburst being far below the Fascist standard, the Fascist Prime Minister had sent to the weakling editor of that paper an amended version, thus: " Fascist Italy is in a position if necessary to carry the Tricolour beyond the frontier, but never to lower it." His audience, as no doubt he expected, enthusiastically applauded, and no doubt were reminded of the current photographs which depicted Signor Mussolini standing recklessly (but at a respectful distance) in a den of tamed circus lions, or stroking the neck of a tamed tiger, alert on tip-toe the while.

Herr Stresemann, who in his turn was expected by German opinion to take his cue, made a speech on the subject three days later (February 9th, 1926), but fortunately he had no Fascist standard to live up to. He made a sensible speech, affirming that there was no quarrel with Italy, that Italian sovereignty over the Southern Tyrol was fully recognised by Germany, that any unpleasantness that might be threatened by Signor Mussolini was best answered from Geneva, and that the

Fascist outburst merely strengthened Germany's desire to enter the League. He disclosed incidentally that during the Locarno Conference Italy had tried to obtain a new international guarantee for the Brenner frontier, and that when Germany's view was asked about it, the Italian delegate was reminded that it was Austria's business, not Germany's.

Signor Mussolini, having tasted oratorical blood, was on the war-path again within twenty-four hours of Herr Stresemann's speech. Having planted the Tricolour, however, wherever the Fascist imagination willed it, there seemed nothing more for him to do but to confirm everything he had already said. "I confirm in the spirit and in the letter" (he said) "every word of my previous speech, not excluding the final words about the flag and the Brenner frontier." When words about flags and frontiers are confirmed, even if they be confirmed in the spirit as well as in the letter, they do not seem to be quite so impressive as before, and Signor Mussolini's second effect was less aggressive, and to that extent disappointing to those who hero-worshipped him. He shouted "Hands off!" to Geneva, but as there was nothing for Geneva to put its hands on, no one minded. The Austrian Government refused to be "drawn," and Signor Mussolini's net profit was a lyrical chorus of approval from certain quarters in Paris and the satisfaction of having made some nervous people jumpy.

The subject of South Tyrol was always effective in drawing out the worst that was in Signor Mussolini: his pomposity, his intransigence, his vulgarity. Speaking of South Tyrol, he declared in 1926 that "the frontiers of Italy are marked out by the finger of God." On February 26th, 1926, he gave an interview to a corre-

spondent of the *Petit Parisien*, published in that paper on the following day, in which he declared:

"When I visited South Tyrol I noticed that everything there was German: church, school, public functionaries, railway and post-office officials. Everywhere nothing but the German language was to be heard, and people sang songs such as in Rome would have caused them immediate arrest. . . . Now in all schools of this province the teaching of the Italian language is obligatory, all post and railway officials are Italians, and we are just now about to settle there a large number of Italian families. One thousand families of ex-combatants will be sent to South Tyrol with a view of promoting the work of improving the soil. At Meran, where there are nitrogen industries, we have settled 400 Italian families, and several hundreds more are being employed in the zinc mines near that town. In this way we shall succeed in Italianising the country, just as we have Italianised the 'Sette Comuni' near by. . . ."

A short time before (February 6th, 1926) he had declared that: "We shall methodically and tenaciously apply our existing laws and all such as will yet be promulgated to make those regions Italian, because geographically and historically they are so in reality." Signor Mussolini, who must at one time have known his history, had forgotten it. He need only refresh his memory by consulting the monastic archives, the birth registers of the parish churches, the tombstone inscriptions, if he wants to know the race and language of the people who have inhabited South Tyrol for the past thousand years. From claiming geography and history as the allies of Italian Fascismo, he went on to place his Deity in the same category, for it was on that occasion that he made the remark;

"The frontiers of Italy are marked out by the finger of God."

It seems odd that the peoples of Europe should not one and all be heartily sick of such tiresome vendettas as the attempt to stamp out the inborn habits and the language of foreign peoples who have come under a new political control. The cause of nationality is not a sacred cause on either side, but the attempt to stamp out nationality is so preposterously stupid a proceeding, so provocative of ill will, and so commonplace a cause of war in Europe, that those who still pursue it must be almost totally lacking in that sense of responsibility which should be one of the first qualifications for power. It is clear that even before Signor Mussolini marched on Rome, a process of denationalisation had been started in South Tyrol, and overwhelmingly clear that Signor Mussolini has exultingly pushed it to extremes. He himself not only does not deny, but boasts of it, and there is no need to prove the case.

After his first phase of boisterous confidence there descended upon him a sort of morbid nervousness, which was no doubt intensified by physical ill health. After a few years of dictatorship he had created so many enemies at home and abroad—his political opponents were mostly exiled—that he was once or twice the victim of attempts on his life on public occasions. A pistol bullet on one occasion grazed his nose, and although he appeared bravely enough on a balcony and addressed his cheering mob through the bandages with which his face was dressed, his nerve was clearly affected. He became particularly alarmed at the prospect of going abroad. When the Locarno Conference was held in October 1925 he evaded it till the very last day (Friday, October 16th), when the treaties were initialled. Even

on that day he went to Locarno for a few hours only. He went by boat across Lake Maggiore and left again by boat immediately after the treaties were initialled. I remember trying to call on him while he was in Locarno. It was not known where he stayed during his few hours' visit, but I made a shot at it, and went to the house of the Italian Consul. I was received with courtesy, but Signor Mussolini had already embarked on the lake. I was shown the cup still standing on his table from which he had a few minutes before drunk his ration of hot milk. At that time he was living almost exclusively on milk.

On another occasion he played with the idea of coming to London to attend a certain international conference. He stipulated that the British Government should arrange his hotel accommodation on two principles, (i) that no other visitor to the hotel should have a room on the same floor, (ii) that the rooms immediately above and immediately below his bedroom be similarly left unoccupied. The conditions could not be fulfilled by any of the good hotels, and Signor Mussolini did not come to London.

Another example—a rather ludicrous example—of Signor Mussolini's nervousness, was given us in 1927. It happened that Jugoslav popular feeling towards Italy, which had taken a friendly course since the Italian-Jugoslav " Treaty of Friendship and Cordial Collaboration " was signed on January 27th, 1924, was so much modified by the news of the Italo-Albanian Treaty of Tirana, signed on November 27th, 1926, that M. Ninčić, the Jugoslav Foreign Minister, who had been responsible for the Italo-Jugoslav treaty, felt impelled to resign.

Signor Mussolini, it appeared, was alarmed at the turn of feeling in Jugoslavia. On March 17th, 1927,

alarmist reports began to be printed in the Italian papers alleging Jugoslav military preparations on the Albanian border. The point of the story was that, under the Treaty of Tirana, Italy had certain "obligations" to protect Albania against aggression, and Italian concern about Jugoslav designs wore a necessarily unconvincing air to those who had followed Italian propaganda about the Adriatic for a generation past. M. Perić, however, who had succeeded M. Ninčić as Jugoslav Foreign Minister, was clever enough to see that the simplest way of checkmating Signor Mussolini was to offer a prompt, impartial investigation to establish whether Italian "fears" had any foundation. He not only made such an offer, but suggested that the inquiry be carried out by British, French and German military experts. It was a particularly clever offer, for the reason that it was safe to expect the French and German military experts to be hard of conviction that Italy was right. The prompt and unreserved way in which the offer was made was generally interpreted as vindicating Jugoslav good faith.

There were those who, while normally critical of Signor Mussolini, maintained in this case that he had acted in good faith. Their argument was something like this. If Italy's object had been to stampede Jugoslav military bands near the Albanian frontier into some rash and compromising act which would have afforded the desired pretext for an Italian landing, why was the apparently organised Italian Press campaign of March 18th made to synchronise with the Italian Government's Note to the Powers informing them of Italy's fears? In the corresponding case of Corfu the Italian fleet moved before the ultimatum to Greece could be answered, and the Powers were ignored. Corfu was a palpable case of

attempted annexation. No doubt Italy's subsequent experience at Geneva had some influence on Italy's Balkan experience in March 1927, but those who dispute the analogy of Corfu in 1923 with Albania in 1927 have much to justify them. On the other hand, it was difficult to see why Signor Mussolini had started all the pother if he had no ulterior motive. It was at any rate difficult for those curiously numerous people who in all their philosophic speculation about the phenomenon of Mussolini have debated every explanation except a lack of intelligence on the part of Signor Mussolini. Yet his Balkan diplomacy of March 1927 can hardly be explained by any intelligent hypothesis.

The aftermath of the noise he made about the Jugo-slav army did not enable Signor Mussolini to cut a heroic figure. The Governments of Germany, France and Great Britain began discussing among themselves the precise form which the proposed Perić inquiry should take. Germany having no military attaché at Belgrade, it readily became common ground that the personnel of the proposed commission should consist of military experts instead of military attachés. The whole business, however, was regarded as equally tiresome in Berlin, in Paris and in London. Naturally enough, Signor Mussolini too began to find it tiresome. It was some-what unfortunate for him that the grave allegations he had made against Belgrade should be adjudicated by a tribunal in which Germany and France were in a majority. M. Perić, equally naturally, became keener on satisfying Signor Mussolini in proportion as Signor Mussolini became more unwilling to be satisfied. The ridiculous agitation started by Rome threatened to become a source of embarrassment of a minor sort to the three Western Powers. As a result, they discussed it leisurely,

and by slow degrees came to the conclusion that it would be best to hold an inquiry on the Jugoslav side of Albania in the event of Signor Mussolini's having any further occasion for anxiety in the future, but that it would hardly be necessary to investigate the bases, if any, of Signor Mussolini's anxiety in the recent past. Rome relapsed into silence.

After that nervous interlude there emerged a phase of somewhat chastened maturity. Signor Mussolini no longer went out of his way to provoke France, and appeared genuinely to desire an understanding with the Balkan countries. He quickly agreed with M. Veniselos in 1928 on a pact of friendship. He had by now been relegated to an inconspicuous place in the Press of the world, a place wherein was reflected the security of his own position at home and the quiet nature of his policy abroad. At the beginning of 1929 he settled a sixty-years' controversy between the Italian State and the Roman Catholic Church, he and Cardinal Gasparri on February 11th signing a Political Treaty, a Concordat and a Financial Convention. That was a notable achievement in a pacific sense.

As if, however, to show that he must not yet be taken for granted as a pacific force in the world, he was frank enough, when the "Fascist Constituent Assembly" —as he called the moribund Chamber—rose on December 8th, 1928, to warn the deputies that his present quietude was the prelude to something more controversial. He reviewed the work of the last four years, and in the course of his speech mentioned the Kellogg Pact. In his treatment of that subject he made a disturbing observation. "We do not wish," he said, "to disturb the equilibrium of Europe, but we must be ready. No one of you therefore should be surprised . . . if, when the

period of our convalescence is over, I demand from the nation another effort to put our land, sea and air forces on a proper footing." The consideration which led him, as he explained, to make that observation was that, in spite of the "transcendental" nature of the Kellogg Pact, the reality remained that the nations were arming themselves. Thus did Signor Mussolini promise to make his contribution to universal mischief, on the sole ground that mischief was afoot. The politicians of the world break many windows—if one may adapt a saying of Sir Austen Chamberlain's—which the nations of the world have to mend. It is true that Washington, which could have been setting a good example, was at that time setting a bad example. If the ratification of the Kellogg Pact in the United States Senate took place in the same session in which the Cruiser Bill was passed and the Coolidge desire that the time-limit be eliminated was ignored, who shall throw stones at cynics?

Although it is true that Signor Mussolini has softened and matured a little in character; although he has done practical good, for the moment, to Italy by making the public services efficient, by creating an atmosphere of financial stability and promoting Italy's economic interests, yet the question whether he is to leave Italy or Europe or the world better or worse when he quits cannot yet be answered except in the probable negative. For all his gift of delegation in administration—a gift which amounts to genius—he is creating in Italy, not a machinery of government which is likely to continue functioning after him, but a provisional revolutionary organisation absolutely dependent upon the continuance of himself in command. There is no national unity as its basis. He has imposed upon Italy, not a national unification, but the supremacy of a party. Political

opponents are either waiting abroad for their opportunity or hiding their real heads at home. Bitter resentment lies dormant among those Italians who differ from him, and, differing from him, have been subjected by him to grotesque injustice and persecution. When his grip relaxes, the flood gates of that resentment are likely to open, and it will surprise many people experienced in affairs if the last state of Italy is not worse than the first. In foreign policy, while it is true that he has latterly avoided provoking active unfriendliness among his neighbours, he has given none of his thought to any constructive ideal of world peace. He has not helped the League of Nations, nor inspired any confidence anywhere in peace or security. He signed the Locarno treaties and the "Kellogg" Pact, but he did so in a somewhat passive spirit, having contributed little to the preliminary work in either case. Having had the immense opportunity of doing something—an opportunity, be it conceded, entirely created by his own force of character working upon the unusually docile nature of the Italian national character—it would be surprising if he had failed to do some good somewhere. Contrasted with his opportunity, however, his achievement is small.

§ 3. Count Volpi

Count Volpi is chiefly known to English people as a financier, but his full name, Count Volpi di Misurata, is associated with his record as a diplomatist. He was made Governor-General of Tripolitania for the purpose of completing the Italianisation of that new colony, and on January 26th, 1922, he landed at Misurata Marina on his mission. It was in recognition of the success of his mission that the addition was made to his name.

One effect of Signor Mussolini's dictatorship has been to put a fence round Italy and to cut her off from the rest of the world. One of the few Italian politicians who has made contact abroad since the establishment of the Dictatorship is Count Volpi, the Finance Minister who negotiated with Mr. Churchill in 1926 a funding of the Italian debt to Great Britain. He showed himself to be charming, courteous, polite and as hard as nails in the driving of a bargain. Italian politicians have developed an exaggerated fear of the Press. Having entirely suppressed their own free Press and substituted a docile propagandist Press, they feel some security at home, but a correspondingly acute nervousness abroad. When Count Volpi arrived in London on the evening of January 13th, 1926, one of his first acts was to send his visiting card, with a polite greeting, to a select list of British journalists who were likely to set the tone in the Press treatment of the impending conference.

The Italo-British debt-funding conference opened at the Treasury on February 15th and ended in agreement on February 26th. Count Volpi was in a gay spirit throughout the conference, his gaiety being due to a confident expectation—justified by the event—that Mr. Churchill would feed from his hand. Let not Mr. Churchill be judged too hastily. Let his critics try to obtain payment of debts from European Great Powers, whether from Russia, France or Italy. With that reservation, however, it is necessary to be under no illusion about the extent to which Mr. Churchill sanctioned an Italian repudiation of the debt. Count Volpi started off with an offer of £4,500,000 as a basic annuity for sixty-two years. Mr. Churchill wanted at least £10,000,000—that sum being considerably below 50 per cent. of what Italy owed. In the end Mr. Churchill

agreed to £4,000,000—less than Count Volpi's original bargaining offer.

It was a leisurely conference, leisurely not only because an Italian delegation was concerned, but because Count Volpi's tactics were to "sit tight" until Mr. Churchill gave in. The Italian experts meanwhile held the pass at the Treasury by the discussion of irrelevant issues. The point was argued, for instance, whether interest on the capital debt should be calculated at simple or compound rate. Everyone who understands simple book-keeping knows that Treasury Bills admit of no other form of interest except compound interest. When a batch of Italian Bills have periodically become due and have not been paid, the method of extending the time limit has been to translate the cash value of the expiring bills into an equivalent of discounted bills, a process which automatically and arithmetically increases the capital debt at compound interest rate. The Italian experts knew this as well as Sir Otto Niemeyer. Count Volpi's obstinacy led to a British Cabinet meeting on January 19th, followed by a meeting of the conference at which "the fundamental points" (to quote the official statement) were considered at length. On January 22nd Count Volpi made an ultimatum offer of £4,500,000 as the basic annuity, a figure which was lower than the average annuity given by Italy to America on a smaller debt contracted a short time ago. Within forty-eight hours Mr. Churchill accepted an even lower figure. The agreement was signed on January 27th, and that same evening was summarised by Mr. Churchill as "an effective and clear £4,000,000 a year for sixty-two years."

Mr. Churchill was less buoyant on that occasion than one ever remembers having seen him. The conference which opened nearly a fortnight earlier in a

snowstorm had ended on a warm spring day, but the financial atmosphere had changed in the opposite sense. The figure of £4,000,000 came as a general surprise, and probably no one was as surprised as Count Volpi. Two great debt-funding operations in which Great Britain has been concerned since the war have both contained surprises. Mr. Baldwin in 1923 surprised Mr. Mellon by the lavishness of the terms given. Mr. Churchill in 1926 surprised Count Volpi by the smallness of the terms he accepted. Both surprises are financed exclusively by the British taxpayer. The simplest way of recording Count Volpi's achievement is to state that on the one hand British taxpayers will continue to pay the equivalent of fivepence in the pound in income tax on the unpaid part of the Italian debt, the Italian paying one penny " in satisfaction of the aforesaid debt," and, on the other hand, the British Government hoped that, in return for that " satisfaction," Italian diplomacy might provide a valuable ally for British diplomacy in many fields bordering on the Mediterranean.

It is worth while chronicling some of the levers that were so successfully used by Count Volpi in his financial encounter with Mr. Churchill. In the first place, he pleaded that former British Governments had by their various schemes put forward since the war led Italian opinion to expect something like a complete cancellation of the debt. In particular, he quoted the Bonar Law scheme of January 1st, 1923, whose object was to avert the calamity of a French invasion of the Ruhr, and whose offer of a virtual cancellation of the Italian debt was made conditional on several contingencies which had not in fact arisen. Secondly, he pleaded with unyielding tenacity for the return of the Italian gold deposit. The expert battle which raged round that £22,200,000 worth

of gold deposited by Italy in 1915 was symbolic of the sort of thing that happened at that conference.

Strictly, Count Volpi had no case whatever for claiming the return of the gold. By written agreement, made in 1915, the gold was to be returned when Italy had repaid the whole debt. As Mr. Churchill now agreed to a repayment by Italy of about one-sixth of the debt, the question of the gold deposit could not arise even if the gold had not been shipped to America. Count Volpi, however, used all the resource of his resourceful mind to convince Mr. Churchill that the gold deposit was something of almost incalculable value to Italy. It represented one-third, he said, of Italy's entire supply of gold. Mr. Churchill's heart melted; and he agreed to return the gold, thereby tearing up with a generous if figurative gesture the original contract. It was that tearing-up process which effected the reduction of Italy's basic annuity from £4,500,000 (the figure everyone had expected) to £4,000,000. Even £4,500,000 was a figure so low that the Cabinet had considered whether it would not be better to break off the conference rather than accept it.

The Cabinet, however, having sunk to £4,500,000 and Mr. Churchill thereupon having sunk to £4,000,000 by promising to return the non-existent gold deposit, a manœuvre took place, which admirably illustrates the pluck and skill of the British Treasury. Those who knew what was what recognised the brain of Sir Otto Niemeyer at this point. The arrangement was that the gold was to be retained in London till September 15th, 1928 (Clause 7 of the agreement). It was then to be repaid by eight very small half-yearly instalments, thereafter by larger instalments, extending equally to 1987. But there was the condition: "Provided always that all

the annuities due under Article I of this agreement have been integrally paid to date." In other words, the gold deposit was made into a continuous guarantee of Italy's payment of the annuities throughout the sixty-two years. That was a highly pertinent arrangement, because one is forced to face the axiom that international debts are not always paid automatically even after a written agreement. The fact that the 1926 agreement started with a preamble stating that " whereas Great Britain holds Italian Treasury Bills to the value of £610,840,000 . . ." contained a whole philosophy in itself. A Treasury Bill is as firm, as categoric, as binding an obligation as any Government can incur. Italy's Finance Minister put his signature to a document which, in effect, was merely a second signature to an already signed obligation to pay, with the difference that the second signature cancelled five-sixths of the obligation.

Count Volpi, in short, gave us a neat illustration of the way in which Continental statesmen " pull the leg " of British statesmen. Mr. Churchill is an adroit politician, well alive to all the tricks so far as Westminster is concerned ; but hopelessly at sea in a trial of wits with the slim practitioners of continental diplomacy. The only three British politicians who have successfully weathered continental guile since the war are Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Curzon and Mr. Bonar Law.

Although Count Volpi has acquiesced in the Mussolini dictatorship, it would be unjust to conclude that he has no ideas of his own. Few men are so possessed of an independence of spirit and versatility of mind. Before Signor Mussolini temporarily stamped out the individual play of the Italian genius, Count Volpi had already made a reputation as a diplomatist who specialised in Near and Middle Eastern problems, as a financier and as a leader

of industry. He is reputed to be immensely wealthy. He has a taste for new adventures, is a born organiser and leader of men. He is the only Italian of any repute who has avoided the two extremes of leaving Italy or becoming a pawn of Mussolini's. He has remained in Italy, accepted the practical limitations of the Mussolini régime, and bides his time.

§ 4. The Other Italians

Signor Mussolini rules in Italy. It is often asked, Who are the other men; who will carry on after him? The answer seems to be that the other men are either living in exile or in silence. What will happen when Signor Mussolini goes, no man can tell. He has collaborators in Rome, but they are not in his confidence. There have been cases where high officials under the Mussolini régime have learnt the first news of their dismissal from the newspapers. All the officials in Rome are raw material in the hands of Mussolini, who picks their brains, makes use of them, but reaches his decisions and issues his edicts without considering their feelings or views. They bear it all. Bonaldo Stringher, Governor of the Bank of Rome, is of such a kind, a good banker without authority; Arnaldo Mussolini, the Duce's brother, who largely controls the Press and edits the *Popolo d'Italia*; Senator Giovanni Gentile, who is warping his undoubted gifts in the production of a Fascist Encyclopædia—all are puppets in the hands of their lord and master.

CHAPTER FIVE: SPAIN

§ 1. The Directory

THE political conditions in Spain are comparable with those of Italy, for in both cases the King remains as nominal head of the State and a dictator rules. The Spanish constitutional monarchy of 1876 has been suspended since September 12th, 1923, when General Primo de Rivera, the Marqués de Estella, established a military directory. The quantity of ruling dictators is a feature of our time: Mustapha Kemal Pasha in Turkey, Comrade Stalin in Russia, Marshal Pilsudski in Poland, King Alexander in Jugoslavia, Signor Mussolini in Italy, General Primo de Rivera in Spain, and until 1928 the Amir Amanullah in Afghanistan.

It is one of the effects of a dictatorship that the outside world hardly knows how thin is the dictator's ice until the ice has broken. The censorship of news is a common precaution adopted by every dictator, for the obvious tactical reason that a general assumption of the dictator's security may become a contributing factor in that security.

§ 2. General Primo de Rivera

In the case of the Spanish dictatorship, the six years' experiment has lacked the dramatic elements that attracted attention, for instance, to Italy, to Russia, to Afghanistan. General Primo de Rivera is one of the quiet dictators. He has enjoyed in Spain a reputation for a certain benevolence in the use of his arbitrary power, and has never indulged in the sort of theatrical pomp of power which Signor Mussolini in the early days gave way to, no doubt for the practical purpose of impressing his subjects and discouraging opposition. It has been remarked, how-

ever, that General Primo's benevolence and his propensity for " hobnobbing " with his subjects have been curtailed each time he has discovered an incipient intrigue against himself. Unfortunately for himself, he jeopardised the support of the army, especially of the artillery regiments, when he ordained that promotion should be dependent on seniority of service only.

In spite of his difficulties, however, there was ground for the belief that, as the result of six years' organisation, he was moulding the country into a sort of settled routine. There was evidence that he was feeling the ground firmer under his feet. At the beginning of November 1928, he issued a decree which modified the existing constitution, revised the competence of certain existing Ministries, and created a new Ministry, the Ministry of National Economy. The new Ministry was to be given a general competence, with the help of technical committees specially constituted for the purpose, of developing the country economically.

Having thus overhauled the machinery of his Government, he next reconstituted its personnel, himself retaining the portfolios of President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and bringing into his Ministry a well-known and capable financier and economist, Don Francisco Moreno Zulueta, to take up the new portfolio of the Ministry of National Economy. Señor Zulueta was thus at last rewarded for the unwavering support he had given to General Primo from the moment the dictatorship was launched.

It even looked as if General Primo towards the end of 1928 had succeeded in giving to Spain an instrument of government, the National Assembly, which had proved nearer in practice to democratic machinery than anything Spain had enjoyed under the old oligarchies. A com-

mittee of that Assembly had prepared the recommendations on which the decree revising the constitution had been founded.

If, however, according to the available information, General Primo de Rivera was moving paradoxically on democratic lines, it was soon made clear that there was a limit to the length of his tether. How did we know what was being done in Spain? Through the Spanish newspapers. How much could we believe? To cast doubt on the reliability of a whole Press may seem somewhat cavalier; but a Press working for six years under a strict censorship becomes a travesty of itself. A rather depressing illustration both of that travesty and of the general docility into which the Spanish Press had degenerated under the autocratic régime, was given on November 28th, 1928, when a deputation of Spanish editors bearded the Dictator in his den, took fright, and stultified themselves at the outset. They had had the temerity to approach the Dictator on the subject of his censorship of the Press. Editors normally admit of no censorship over their news, except their own censorship. Yet those Spanish editors, cowed by six years of suppression, started off their interview by conceding to the Dictator that they could not expect, did not expect, him to grant them the freedom of the Press! To such a depth of inferiority complex had servility reduced them that they could not screw up enough courage even to ask for something for which they were entitled to ask.

They therefore tentatively and gingerly made four minor requests. The first was that the Dictator should command his censors to prolong their daily work of censorship till 8 p.m., so that they (the unhappy editors) should at any rate be given a chance of using news that might come in up to dinner-time. The next was that it

should not be necessary for each paper to obtain separate authority to publish the same item of news, and that authority being given to one newspaper, it should be deemed to apply to all newspapers. The third request was even more pitiful than the first two. It was requested that the Dictator's henchmen should refrain from punishing newspapers when those newspapers obediently did what they were told: for instance, if a newspaper published an item of news after submitting it to the censor, and after obtaining the censor's *fiat*, and if later the Dictator regretted the permission thus given, the innocent loyal newspaper should not be penalised. (There is even on record the case of a newspaper which asked permission to publish a certain piece of news. The permission was refused, and the newspaper obediently refrained from publishing; but was then fined for having even submitted such an item of news to the censor! One has to go to "Stalky & Co." for a parallel to such artistry in bullying.)

The last request made by the bold editors—bold as they no doubt thought themselves for daring to make requests—was that threats of force should no longer be used to induce a journalist to betray the first convention of his craft—that is, to reveal the sources of his information. Lastly, it was requested that the newspapers should not be compelled to publish all official statements, whether they wanted to publish them or not, but that the publication of such statements be "optional."

The mere recital of what those editors asked establishes the extent to which they had lost all spirit; so lacking were they in bravery that one cannot be surprised at the roundness with which the Dictator proceeded to dismiss them. He promised, it is true, to "consider" the feasibility of extending the censorship hours, in answer

to request number one, but the other requests he comprehensively rejected on the ground, of all grounds, that the " public " must be protected from " false " news!

Governmental censorship is productive of probably more sublime, if unsuspected, humour than any other Governmental endeavour. A play by Jacinto Benevente, of which the plot concerned the family of the late Tsar of Russia, was banned, lest the Spanish audiences should inadvertently imagine it to refer to the King of Spain and his family. It appears that even the newspapers thereupon lashed themselves into a mild fury, and went the length of criticising the censorship. They stopped well short of fundamentals, however, and General Primo need not have resorted to sleeping draughts on their account.

On another account, however, he was for the first time given cause for apprehension. The artillery officers, whose resentment against the reform above mentioned had not abated, showed themselves ready to take any opportunity of expressing their feelings. It happened that the banning of Benevente's play, being so stupid and so apparently pointless, proved more provocative to Spanish feeling than many other, more serious impositions of arbitrary authority. The students in several cities were provoked into demonstrating against it, and the noise they made started a fashion. At Segovia the artillery officers entered with alacrity into the fray, but at that time they confined themselves to emulating the student manifestations. They made a noise, and stoned a portrait of General Primo de Rivera.

More serious manifestations, however, soon followed. News of a full military revolt came across the frontier, although it was clearly difficult, in view of the censorship, to assess the exact value of what was reported. On January 29th, 1929, however, General Primo de Rivera

himself made a statement in the National Assembly which at any rate confirmed the fact that a definite attempt at an organised revolt had been made. He said that a military revolt had been planned, that the plot had been spread over the whole country, that it had been defeated at the outset, except in one place over 100 miles from Madrid—namely, at Ciudad Real, where the First Regiment Light Artillery had succeeded in occupying the police barracks and in commanding the railways and the roads with their guns. General Primo added that the immediate measures taken by the Government to suppress the revolt had succeeded in their object. Presumably they did succeed, or we should have heard more about the revolt. For the moment therefore the dictatorship was saved.

An illustration, however, of the danger of drawing conclusions was given us on the very next day (January 30th, 1929), when it became known that the attempt at rebellion had not been confined to the military and naval forces. It was now established that certain politicians had been implicated as well, and a former Conservative Prime Minister, Señor Sanchez Guerra, was arrested at Valencia. Thereafter the news became confused and even contradictory. By the last day of January, for instance, the rebels had been ejected from Ciudad Real, where they, in the first instance, had gained their most pronounced success. On February 2nd the military revolt broke out also in Valencia, and the outbreak was admitted in a statement issued by the Government in Madrid on the following day. On that day a former Cabinet Minister and three Generals were arrested.

It now appeared that General Primo de Rivera was beginning to take the rebellion seriously. On February 3rd two decrees were issued over the King's signature, one of them prescribing that a special court be established

to support the police in the measures that were being taken to suppress the revolt. The Court was to be composed of military judges who were to have the power of investigation into the revolt as a whole. The other decree invested the Government with power to exile, suspend the salary of, or dismiss any civil servant who was suspected of holding views disloyal to the régime. In the first week of February, when the first intimation was received abroad that the rebellion had had a political as well as a military complexion, there was a natural tendency in the outside Press to give prominence to whatever news it could get. The Spanish Government meanwhile vainly attempted to combat the effect of the foreign Press by issuing official corrections of the news that had gone abroad. Those "corrections," however, were hardly given the prominence that had been given, and that continued to be given, to the reports themselves.

In spite of what Madrid had to say to the contrary, the evidence accumulated, even on the strength of what Madrid itself admitted, that all was not going well with the dictatorship. On February 5th, for instance, an official statement issued from Madrid disclosed the fact that the Captain-General of Valencia, General Castro Girona, had been committed to trial for dereliction of duty. Concurrently, however, with such admissions of the seriousness of the situation, General Primo continued his attempt to combat what he called the exaggerations of the scaremongers. He made a public offer of £1000 to whoever could give information leading to the identification of anybody who had been killed or wounded in any of the alleged fighting or who could prove (presumably in a Spanish court of law) that he had seen with his own eyes any fighting whatsoever.

It may be readily imagined that General Primo's

£1000 was safe enough from his own point of view. It is clear that no one could have seen any fighting or any bloodshed in Spain unless he had been in Spain. The notion that anyone in Spain would accept the Dictator's challenge (in the hope of receiving the Dictator's £1000) and attempt to prove that the Dictator was a liar—such a notion needs no exploding from the outside. It may be that no one had been killed or wounded in the Spanish fighting; one simply did not know, and the £1000 was no evidence at all. If the Dictator had offered a financial reward to any newspaper editor who could prove that he, as a newspaper editor, had a grievance, there would have been no competition for the reward.

The farce of the situation culminated on February 9th. On that day there was published a Royal Order which announced certain measures that were to be taken as a result of the conspiracy that had now been defeated. One of the new measures empowered the police to arrest anyone who said anything disrespectful about a Minister of the Crown or about any official authority and to close any club which engaged in " illegal " political discussions. Another measure ordained that all Government departments were to start a system of registers in which a record was to be kept of the characteristics of every person working in the department, such characteristics as his capacity for holding his peace and his capacity for working hard and loyally in support of the régime. Still another ordinance prescribed that any act on the part of any corporation in direct touch with ministerial departments which might be judged by Madrid to be a hostile act against the Government would render that corporation liable to immediate dissolution. It was further ordered that special registers were to be compiled to embody information given by the Patriotic Union about all

persons who had an inclination to criticise the Government.

Such measures seemed to betray either a sense of insecurity on the part of the Directorate, or a contemptuous indifference to its own prestige in the country.

CHAPTER SIX: AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

§ 1. A Danubian Contrast

THE disruption of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into Austria and Hungary, both fragments disorganised and bankrupt, resulted almost inevitably in the emergence of two strong men in whom the distracted people vested an almost dictatorial power. The two men, Count Stephen Bethlen, Prime Minister of Hungary, and Dr. Ignaz Seipel, the statesman-priest of Austria, Chancellor, Minister for Home Affairs, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, present an illuminating contrast. Dr. Seipel is less well known than Count Bethlen. His work has been heroic, pacific and wholly conducive to Austria's true interests. Count Bethlen's activities have been more controversial. He has made enemies, has roused international concern. He therefore has figured more largely in the Press of the world, and in Hungary is a more fanatically popular person than Dr. Seipel is in Austria. Yet Dr. Seipel has done more for Austria than Count Bethlen has for Hungary. Such is the political way of the world.

§ 2. Dr. Seipel

Ignaz Seipel is indeed a remarkably good specimen of the best type of German. Born in 1876, he studied theology at Vienna University and took Holy Orders in 1899. Ten years later he filled the Chair of Moral Theology in the Theological College of Salzburg, and for a short time edited the *Catholic Church Newspaper* of that city. In 1917 he went to the Chair of Moral Theology in Vienna. Up till then his interest and his work were concerned only with religion. He was an

admirable priest, a good man, a good scholar. It was the political atrocity of the Great War, the terrifying hold which politics exert over the habits of men, the wicked crime of war—war is undiluted politics—that turned his mind from a high to a low plane of human activity, from religion to politics. His motive was an unselfish concern for his fellows, a desire to do his bit to help the nations from the political hell in which they were entrapped.

He was one of the brave international spirits who in 1917 congregated in Switzerland and tried to stop the war at all costs; but they cried in the wilderness. The beastliness of war is impervious to common sense, and the politicians of the leading countries of the world decreed a continuance of slaughter and of economic destruction.

Dr. Seipel's first political post was that of Minister of Social Welfare in the 1918 Cabinet of his friend the late Dr. Lammasch. In 1922 he formed a Cabinet himself. No bleaker prospect ever faced a human being. When he formed his Cabinet, the Austrian crown, symbolising the means of livelihood to the Austrian people, was beginning to crash. National bankruptcy became a real danger. The Conference of London, coldly concentrated on the financial reparation of war, was deaf to Austria, and by referring her request for an international loan to the League of Nations, it thought, no doubt, to refer it to the Greek Kalends, for the League was then untried as financial saviour. It was at that supreme moment of trial that Dr. Seipel's quality was tested and found adequate. He decided to go abroad himself—in action he showed himself remarkably like M. Veniselos—made lightning visits to Prague, Berlin, Verona, then to Geneva, where the Council of the League was to consider Austria's apparently hopeless case. He made a profoundly impressive appeal to the representatives of the more fortunate

European Powers, and within a month triumphantly obtained the credits he wanted.

All that took place in the first four months of his Prime Ministership. Austria from that moment—October 4th, 1922—was saved. A political miracle was enacted. The League of Nations loan was so decisive a success that the success was repeated in other countries. The bank-note printing presses were stopped. The currency was stabilised, in a few years the Budget was balanced, the enemies of Austria (the product of former Austrian politicians) were subdued. Dr. Seipel has worked with Trojan energy, with simple unaffectedness and a deliberate avoidance both of the theatrical pomp affected by Signor Mussolini and the arrogant nationalism of Count Bethlen. All the time he has continued to live in his simple rooms in his Cloister, a quiet, great man.

There is a deadly symbolism, a true indictment of political tradition, in the fact that Dr. Seipel has not escaped the bullets of the would-be political assassin. On January 1st, 1924, he was shot at in the entrance to the Vienna South Railway station, and was seriously wounded in the lungs. His life was saved, and the general indignation was at any rate a healthy thing. He recovered quickly enough to celebrate on July 23rd, 1924, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entry into the priesthood, on which occasion Pope Pius XI telegraphed his congratulations and his tribute to the magnificent work in pacific construction that he had done.

§ 3. President Hainisch

Austria has been fortunate also in her President, Michael Hainisch, the son of a spinning-mill owner, barrister, student of the science of national economy,

farmer and breeder of a famous line of pedigree cattle. He was the first President of the Republic and was re-elected to the Presidency for a further period of four years in 1924. As President he had the good sense and the good-will to concentrate on damping down social, industrial and political controversies. His fine head, piercing eyes and full rounded beard are in some degree suggestive of Mr. C. P. Scott, the famous editor of the *Manchester Guardian*.

§ 4. Count Bethlen

Of Count Bethlen one need not say much. According to his lights, no doubt, he has tried to do what he honestly thought was best in Hungary's interests, and he is endowed, it is true, with a certain persistence of character which has served Hungary well financially. He obtained his credits (with Sir William Goode's help) from the League of Nations; and although his Budgets have their controversial aspect, and although diplomatically he is not trusted by Hungary's neighbours, he has done certain things which, on some criteria, are good for his country. He has arrested financial decay. He has performed the excellent service of saving Hungary from Communism. If only his diplomacy had been inspired by a little of President Masaryk's philosophy, of Dr. Seipel's humanity, of M. Veniselos's statesmanship, he would have been a bigger man than he is, and Hungary would be better off than she is.

Count Stephen Bethlen de Bethlen was born in 1873, educated at Budapest University (law), and made his first big contribution to his country's politics when, in the winter of 1918–1919, he built up a counter-revolutionary organisation. He represented Hungary at the Con-

ference of Trianon; became Prime Minister in April 1921, when Count Teleki resigned; had the satisfaction in September 1921 of introducing Hungary to membership of the League of Nations; and a month later at the Conference of Venice recaptured for Hungary the city of Sopron, which had been allotted to Austria by the peace treaties. He dethroned the Habsburgs, and when the loyalists Count Apponyi and Count Andrássy declared war on the Government, he dissolved parliament. The first landmark in his work of economic reconstruction was fixed in 1924, when he obtained a twenty years moratorium against reparation payment and a loan through the League of Nations. In 1927 he concluded an Italo-Hungarian Pact of Friendship with Signor Mussolini.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CZECHOSLOVAKIA

§ 1. A New Republic

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is the name given by Dr. T. G. Masaryk in 1918 to a new state created by the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czechs were freed from German–Austrian and the Slovaks from Magyar rule, and the Czechoslovaks of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Ruthenia combined to form an independent Republic with Dr. Masaryk as its first President. The President is elected for a period of seven years, and is normally re-eligible for a second period only. In President Masaryk's case he is eligible for life, that exception being made in honour of his services to the State. Each of the five provinces has been given an autonomous administration.

The political system is a two-chamber government based on full adult suffrage conducted on the principle of proportional representation. There are some sixteen political parties, the biggest of which, as established by the 1925 election, is the Czechoslovak Republican (Agrarian) Party. Dr. Švehla and Dr. Hodža, who are described in the following pages, both belong to that party. Dr. Beneš, the Foreign Minister and general right hand of Dr. Masaryk, belongs to the National Socialist Party, but holds office not as a party man, but as virtually a non-party nominee of the President. That circumstance is exceptional.

The new state started its career under great disadvantages, as will be made clear in the following sections; but the difficulties have been met with remarkable success.

§ 2. President Masaryk

Three good men emerged from the politics of the war and its consequences: President Wilson, Dr. Masaryk and M. Veniselos. The American people and the Greek people cast out their good men. Czechoslovakia was more sensible.

Thomas Garrigue Masaryk is one of the great personalities of our time. Born on March 7th, 1850, the son of a coachman who made him a locksmith's apprentice, he has lived to achieve distinction as a university professor, a political and moral philosopher, a Member of Parliament, a party leader, a revolutionary leader, the creator of a new State and its first President.

He is acknowledged by students of Russian affairs to be one of the classic authorities on Russia. His two-volumed "The Spirit of Russia," published first in Germany, and translated into English at the end of the war, provides an almost inexhaustible source for students. The chief characteristic of Masaryk's thought is its compression and intensity, which make severe demands upon the reader, but abundantly repay them. To understand the moral force which always underlies President Masaryk's political work one has to remember the national background in which he was born and trained. The political awakening of the Czech people dates from the French Revolution of 1848. President Masaryk has lived long enough to remember the failure of the movement started by the historian Palacky in the middle of last century, which aimed at the reform of Austria into a federation of equal nations, one of which would be Czech. Palacky himself had to confess that Austria was incapable of such an evolution, and he reverted in his later years to an advocacy of complete separation.

PRESIDENT MASARYK

President Masaryk is the man who now at last has achieved that object.

When the Germans defeated the French in 1871 the Nationalist movement among the Czechs was put back, as it proved, for half a century, and in the meantime the Czech leaders, including Dr. Masaryk, had to work under a constitution which they repudiated and under an alien and oppressive governing clique. Both Palacky and Masaryk had learnt by their experience that Czech progress and Czech victories had been achieved by moral factors; hence Dr. Masaryk's famous ideal for the Czech nation—"What is needed is an inner renovation, without which there is no meaning in political liberty. What is needed is an active love for one's neighbour, without which there is no true patriotism. What is needed is to love, to seek and to defend the truth. What is needed is to establish public life upon the basis of morality and truth."

Similarly, when he was in London in the latter half of the Great War, Dr. Masaryk, as he himself explained, acted on the principle that "justice is not only noble, but also prudent and expedient." The principles on which the Habsburg monarchy was based were the negation of the principles expressed by Dr. Masaryk. During the war, therefore, he spent his energies in exposing that degenerate dynasty, its senseless imperialism, and its crude militarism. He summed up his crusade in his propagandist masterpiece, "The New Europe," a book which he wrote as he travelled round the world during the war. The Czechoslovak National Council had to work entirely abroad during the war, for the censorship imposed upon the Czechs by the Austrian military authorities amounted to persecution. Not only were the newspapers gagged or suspended so far as they showed Radical

tendencies, but only Austrian official news ever saw the light in the Czech Press. Even scientific and literary works were censored and mutilated. One example will show the meticulous care with which the censorship was carried out. In a memoir of an Anglophil Czech there appeared the sentence: "He strove to emancipate Czech literature from German and French influence." The words "German and" were struck out for publication.

President Masaryk and Dr. Beneš did most of their war-work in England, Switzerland and America. It is an example of Czech thoroughness that President Masaryk travelled completely round the world, made special visits to Holland, Germany, Austria and Italy, as well as to the countries already mentioned. In 1915 he founded two newspapers, *La Nation Tchèque* (Paris), and the *Československá Samostatnost*, the latter being a Czech paper for Czechs abroad. He also helped to found *The New Europe*, the well-known English review of foreign affairs, edited and owned by Dr. Seton-Watson; and became a lecturer under Dr. Ronald Burrows, at King's College, London. I had the interesting experience of being associated with *The New Europe* as sub-editor for Dr. Seton-Watson throughout its existence. I therefore came much into contact with Dr. Masaryk. He had a house at Hampstead (No. 21 Platt's Lane), where, helped by his daughter, Miss Olga Masaryk, he worked in a way typical of his rugged method.

The room he worked in was small; his entire apparatus consisted of an open set of wooden pigeon-holes and a Foote's chair. There were about two dozen pigeon-holes, into which he stuffed raw material by subjects, but without any further sort of order. Whenever he wanted to look up a particular point the whole mass of documents was emptied from the relevant pigeon-hole, and he quickly

found what he wanted. He always knew what he possessed, and which pigeon-hole it probably belonged to, but beyond that he had no index nor any system. He did all his writing lying full length on the chair. I remember his once observing to me that you could get the last ounce out of your brain, and make the best of what you got out of it, only if your body was at perfect rest; that the conservation of physical energy and a full sense of physical comfort were necessary for the best functioning of the brain.

It is to me an interesting contrast to have seen Dr. T. G. Masaryk at work in his small cottage in Hampstead, working with a set of wooden pigeon-holes and a comfortable chair, conducting propaganda for the liberation of Czechoslovakia from Austro-Hungarian rule; and then to have seen him at work as the President of the Czechoslovak Republic he had himself created. At the beginning of June 1928, nearly ten years after the foundation of the Republic, he invited me to luncheon at Lany Castle, the President's country seat some twenty miles outside Prague. He was seventy-eight years old. The country had by now reached a condition of hard-working, stable prosperity, all the more remarkable by contrast with the condition of nervous disorder characteristic of the surrounding countries.

"Of course," he said to me on that occasion, "you must remember that the Republic is a new State. In England by contrast you have an old State with old traditions, with machinery that runs. Everything here is new. We have the machinery now, but all the time we have to mend it. We have to create our traditions. That was the task when I came. What it means is that we have to be more careful than an old State. We have to weigh consequences. When we came here after the war,

Bohemia and Moravia, being the richest countries in the whole of Austria, had been impoverished, exploited by the army. There was no bread when I came. The first work was to provide wheat from America, from Rumania, from other sources. Next, the war had upset the whole administration, including the postal service. The post was in such a state in 1918 and 1919 that we had to be careful in the sending of money-letters. Money was not safe in the post, and was often lost. At the railway stations there were no time-tables. If goods were sent by rail—for instance, eatables or clothing—they were in danger, for the people had been bereft of everything they possessed. Our new State began with a minus. Year by year I watched, got figures from my Ministers, and saw by-and-by how the post office, the railways, etc., could be reorganised. So now our machinery runs in good order. That was the work of the new State. In addition, we had to create an army: not a big army, but an army. It has been created. It is in working order. And so on. One of the biggest things we have done has been done in Slovakia and in Ruthenia. There were no schools in those provinces. There are now some 3000 in Slovakia and nearly 1000 in Ruthenia. It costs money, and has been a big financial operation. We also had to stabilise our money. We have succeeded, as you know. Our Budget balances. We have already paid our debts. We have made Economic Treaties with Germany, with Austria, with other countries. The Little Entente is our idea. We have two German Ministers in our Cabinet. All this has been accomplished in a short time. In the old Austrian days there was a continuous national fight. Now there is some progress, some hope. On the whole it is a good bit of work. I may say I am not satisfied. I am an old man, but I hope before dying I shall be satisfied."

He was wearing riding-breeches and leggings, in readiness for the two-hours ride he takes every day, mostly alone, in the forests of Lany. He shares with M. Veniselos the gift of being able to listen with obvious interest, and even pleasure, to conversation which on its merits would be tiresome to minds less large than theirs. President Masaryk's life has been so exciting, so full of action and of achievement; he has met so many people of every country from the highest to the lowest; played so central a rôle in so big an episode of European history; is so profound a philosopher, scholar and sociologist, and so experienced a man of affairs, that at the age of seventy-eight one might have expected him to be bored by small talk. Yet I have been present when quite remarkably uninteresting people have buttonholed him and engaged him in conversation about nothing, and consisting mostly in questions requiring an answer, and I have never seen him present any but an alert and eager front, as if he had just been born.

The likeness to Veniselos in that respect is striking. The difference, however, is that whereas Veniselos speaks in conversation with torrential facility and lightning speed, Masaryk tends to be monosyllabic and slow. I once poured him out a cup of coffee, and asked him if he would have sugar. He considered the matter for fully four seconds and then decreed "No" in a way that suggested something very deliberate and very decisive. I have a letter from him consisting of two words, thus: "Dear Mr. Glasgow, please excuse. T. G. M." It was the covering letter to a document he once sent me and which I had expected a day earlier. In 1918 he spoke English with obvious difficulty, and in writing English often used German constructions and even used to slip into old German characters. He now speaks English easily, but

not fluently. In spite of his overwhelming work, he still finds time to read English literature, old and new. He knows modern English novelists well, and likes to read new novels as soon as they come out.

His thought and diction are completely free from flourish or extravagance. He speaks and writes the distilled essence of his thought, so that to hear him or to read him is a form of mental exercise. He is not always clear in his style, but he is always interesting. When in 1927 he was re-elected to the Presidency for a further period of seven years he delivered a Presidential Message to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Czechoslovak National Assembly and Senate in which the following passage occurred: "And now, after the world war, close consideration is given to the great changes in society which have come into existence everywhere, and which again are regarded by some as a definite, by others as only a partial decay, while others welcome them as signs of regeneration and resurrection. I myself regard the fall of three great Empires and the foundation of new States as a sign of progress and regeneration. Even in a Bedouin's wretched tent you will find simple philosophers of history and politics, reflecting on the consequences of the Great War to Europe and other parts of the world. 'Your Europeans,' they often say, 'are falling, and Asia and Africa are about to occupy your place.' And so while on my journey, in my capacity as President of a new State, I was constantly led to the question as to what keeps nations healthy, what guarantees the stability and permanence of their States and themselves, what, in fact, constitutes the true welfare of nations, what ensures a constant progress and settled existence for them. Every statesman, every politician and every political party, and in fact everybody to whom

the destinies of his own nation, and thus also of other nations, are not indifferent, must discover for himself what is ' the one thing necessary ' for nations and States (as Komensky formulated it), what is not needed, what harms them and leads them to destruction. During the agitated period of the Thirty Years War, Komensky continually reverted to the problem of the decay of States and nations. He left us a small treatise on the happiness of nations, and in the decline of his life—by chance at the same age as myself—he defined the ' one thing necessary ' for the life of society and State. He attached the greatest importance to religion and morality for nation and State, and mentioned seven kinds of obstacles and confusions detrimental to the welfare of the people: a multitude of rulers, a multitude of laws, many interpreters of statutes who bewilder the public courts, a multitude of external ceremonies which obscure the true basis of affairs, contempt for laws and the infringement of them, which is called taking into account things as they are, the mutual jealousy of rulers, and, finally, open wars and bestial savagery. Translated into the terminology of to-day, this is a justifiable criticism of many aspects of present conditions. . . . Democracy must assert itself not only within, but also without. In foreign politics also argument must suppress violence and deceit. The world, as Palacky was well aware, is becoming centralised. No State, no nation can live without agreement and co-operation with its neighbours and other States. Smaller States, we ourselves in our geographical situation, cannot safely continue without the sympathy of neighbours and other States—our *raison d'être* must be acknowledged and respected by the world. Our policy must be a world policy."

§ 4. Dr. Beneš

Dr. Edward Beneš has held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in successive Czechoslovak Governments since 1918, when the Republic was founded. Small in stature, with a small face and head, young in age—he was born in 1884—he has in the short space of ten years made of himself by hard work and scholarly knowledge one of the most respected politicians in Europe. He is a striking exception to the general tendency of politicians to become an unsatisfactory band of adventurers. He is a serious person. There is probably no living man to-day, with the exception of his chief, President Masaryk, who knows as much about European conditions as Dr. Beneš, and there is certainly no politician who has experienced the evolutions of post-war Europe from so close a range, who has benefited so much or remembered so much of what he has seen, heard and done.

A few years ago he was regarded with disfavour by certain types of English political students on the ground that he was friendly towards the policies of the French Government. Those English students felt strongly that French policies were reactionary, and that Dr. Beneš, whose philosophy was progressive, was selling his principles for French diplomatic and military support in Central Europe. Those who knew Dr. Beneš personally knew that such criticisms were less than intelligent. It was the first principle of President Masaryk and of Dr. Beneš to seek peace and to pursue it. To quarrel with France would have been to jeopardise the whole work of Central European pacification and consolidation that has been carried out with such remarkable success. Dr. Beneš, moreover, was the representative of a small Power,

and as such exposed to peculiar danger in case a "great" Power should be antagonised. Greatly daring, however, Dr. Beneš did allow it to be known both in Paris and in London that, in his view, the quarrels of the British and the French Governments were a danger to the political and economic interests of Europe. In one sense Czechoslovakia is the child of Great Britain and of France; and she has been frankly concerned about the quarrels of her parents. Dr. Beneš has risked much in exploring avenues to reconciliation. English critics have also taunted him with "interference": and that criticism is inconsistent with that of servility to France.

Those who have known him well, however, have recognised as the remarkable thing, not Dr. Beneš's dependence on France (in spite of geographical and political circumstances such as might have made Czechoslovakia dependent on France), but his independent statesmanship and courage. He once said in conversation that negative policies can never be justified in diplomacy—that, in short, it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. It follows from the whole history of Dr. Beneš as a diplomatist that he can never lie fallow, that he would prefer to follow in the wake of an operative Franco-British Entente, but that, in default of such a lead, he will invariably take a line of his own. Hence the formation and the intensive cultivation of the Little Entente, inspired primarily by the instinct of self-preservation against a possible German or a possible Hungarian menace; hence also the more recent attempt to extend the process of Central European consolidation.

He has made treaties of friendship with every single Power in Europe with which his country could conceivably come into contact. He has been a pillar of the League of Nations at Geneva, and the author of many

DR. EDWARD BENEŠ

schemes—for instance, the famous Geneva Protocol of 1924—aiming at the peace of Europe. His Geneva Protocol was howled down in 1924 by the British Government. When in 1928 Mr. Kellogg made substantially the same proposal, it was enthusiastically adopted. It is true that there was a certain psychological difference between the two conceptions, but what is more interesting is that the decisive difference was that Mr. Kellogg was the representative of the United States, a rich "great" Power, Dr. Beneš of a small European Power. Such is the way of the world.

Dr. Beneš is not specially distinguished by a sense of humour; but he has a lively sense of the irony of diplomatic affairs. I myself have seen him many times during the past ten years, and I have found no source of information so consistently accurate in substance and so fruitful in suggestion. I have in several distinct crises asked Dr. Beneš what he imagined would be the course of future events, and he has given me an imaginative sketch in detail of what the British, French and German Governments would say and do in the three months ahead. I have taken notes in my diary of what he said and have had the curiosity to compare them later with the actual events. The coincidence of forecast with event has been remarkable.

Dr. Beneš is not a linguist. He still finds difficulty with his English (although it is improving), and his pronunciation of French is as stilted as it ever was, even though his vocabulary is as full as any Frenchman's and his syntax as sure. One remembers the famous occasion in the early days after the war when Dr. Beneš was addressing the Council of the League of Nations in French. Lord Balfour was among his audience, Dr. Beneš being by comparison a mere boy. Lord Balfour

was startled at one point by hearing what he thought to be the words " mes enfants " falling from Dr. Beneš's lips. What Dr. Beneš was trying to say, however, was " mais enfin "—a story which illustrates the originality of Dr. Beneš's pronunciation of French vowels.

§ 5. Other Personalities in Czechoslovakia (Dr. Spina, Dr. Mayr Harting, Dr. Hodža, Dr. Tuka, Dr. Švehla)

The prosperity of Czechoslovakia has been built up by the genius of Dr. T. G. Masaryk and the competent workmanship of Dr. Edward Beneš, supported by an efficient political rank and file. All political names connected with the post-war history of Czechoslovakia are overshadowed by those of Masaryk and Beneš. Yet the work of some of the other men has been interesting and valuable.

(i) dr. spina and dr. mayr harting

It is no fun, or at least a strenuous kind of fun, to build a new country from its foundations, even with Dr. Masaryk as master builder. It is more strenuous when the work has to be started in the backwash of 1914–1918 and against the resentment of the German and Magyar *dépossédés*. Yet at the beginning of the Republic's tenth year the Magyars, Germans and Slovaks in Slovakia, and the Germans and Czechs in Bohemia were well ahead in the consolidation of their interests and in the harmonisation of their feelings. Dr. Spina, a Bohemian-German, and Dr. Mayr Harting, a former Austrian-German, deputies in the Czechoslovak Parliament, had been members of the Government for two years. Dr. Spina,

who before the revolution was a professor of Czech language at Prague University, is an enthusiast for collaboration. Dr. Mayr Harting is more halting in his enthusiasms, but his continuance in office suggests that his position in the Cabinet continues to be congenial to him. None the less, he has grievances which he does not conceal. In conversation he sways his head and says "Yes and No." Is collaboration going well? "Yes and No." Does he regret having joined the Government? "No rather than yes." "Collaboration," he said to me in Prague on June 2nd, 1928, "is the only way to peace in the State, but it is a hard way and difficult. It is a beginning, but we want more." What exactly more he wants he did not clearly specify, except vaguely that the German language should be placed on a footing of equality with the Czech language. He has the objectivity to admit that the Czechs are more elastic than were the Austrians in the corresponding respect, but takes the view that a black and a grey do not make a white. Before the war the Austrian Government allowed Czech to be used officially only in those towns or districts where the Czechs were in an absolute majority. The Czech Government allows German to be used officially if the German population amounts to 20 per cent. The conception, however, of a bilingual state—such as Dr. Mayr Harting, although he did not commit himself, seems to favour—would be difficult to translate into practice.

In the law courts, for instance, there must clearly be one language. Imagine a Czech prosecuting counsel with a poor knowledge of German facing a witness for the defence who knew both languages and pretended only to know German. Obstructionist strategy would find endless avenues open to it. Dr. Mayr Harting, more-

over, is an unconscious illustration of the difficulty of his own thesis. Before 1918 he could not speak Czech, although he has lived in Bohemia for twenty years. Conversely, why should a Czech learn German? If both Czech and German were to be allowed as official languages it would follow in practice that everybody would have to speak both. The case of Dr. Harting himself suggests that such a necessity would be unreasonable. And if there can be only one official language in one given country—a condition that will be conceded by practical people—why in Czechoslovakia should that language not be the native language, Czech? Such is the case, and there is no prospect of a change; but it seems odd that Dr. Mayr Harting, a member of the Czechoslovak Government, should find any difficulty about it.

(ii) DR. HODŽA AND THE SLOVAKS

English observers of a country such as Czechoslovakia have to adjust their focus a little if they want to obtain the true perspective. Values are different. Czechoslovakia is contiguously surrounded on all sides by foreign nations, some of them not well disposed. There is no sea barrier. A thousand miles of frontier, made of low mountains, narrow rivers or open plains, touches Germany, Austria and Hungary. The worst enemy that crosses the fragile frontiers is an exaggerated and persistent propaganda. The Magyar intellectuals who live on either side of the Danube within twenty miles of Bratislava, not content with exploiting the linguistic differences in Slovakia itself, are at pains to emphasise and exaggerate the linguistic difference between Slovaks and Czechs. It is true that in Slovakia there are Slovaks, Magyars and Germans who do not understand each other's speech, and

the names of streets in Bratislava are printed in three languages. Even the Slovaks like to call their language Slovak, not Czech. Yet the difference is slight. A native Slovak of Bratislava would converse with a native Czech of Prague or of Brno much more easily than a native of Manchester would converse with a Cockney. In Central Europe linguistic differences are to the propagandist what food is to a starving man. The trouble is that the Slovaks, especially since the separate administrative districts of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Ruthenia were set up in 1927, have a regional sense of their distinctive qualities. It irritates them if Czech officials call them Czechs, just as it would irritate many Scotsmen to be regarded as Englishmen. But there is no greater constitutional issue between Slovakia and Bohemia than between Scotland and England. Dr. Hodža, the Slovak leader, Minister of Education in the Czechoslovak Parliament, deputy for a Slovak constituency, is as much at home in Prague as Mr. Bonar Law ever was in London.

It is not surprising that the Slovaks are intellectually less developed than the Czechs, for the Magyar ruling class pursued the deliberate policy of not educating them. In 1918 there was not a single Slovak or Ruthenian school maintained by the State, and illiteracy in Slovakia was a European scandal. Since 1918, by contrast, 3000 schools have been built in Slovakia, nearly 1000 in Ruthenia. Even in the barracks the Slovak soldiers are being taught to read and write. Illiteracy will, in time, disappear.

In the meantime Dr. Hodža is training the peasants of Central Europe in the ways of peaceful education. He has formed a Central European peasant entente. The Hungarian peasants have not yet joined it, but it is

reasonable to hope that they will. There are those who regard this agrarian movement as potentially a big thing, likely some day to create an important new factor in Central European politics. It is clear also that the Czechoslovak land reform, which has cut up the large pre-war estates and divided them among half a million small-holding peasants, has established a new agrarian standard of life. The reactionary and dangerous system of pre-war Central Europe, whereby the mass of workers on the land were the badly-paid and illiterate slaves of a few idle landowners, is already doomed elsewhere by the Czechoslovak example.

The new system, which is described by Dr. Hodža as a " combination of economic and social progress with constitutional conservatism," constitutes by its very appeal to the peasants an effective barrier against bolshevist discontent. The process of freeing the land from the oppressive system of large holdings and of giving to the peasant the new joy of ownership, responsibility and personal enterprise has not been uniformly smooth or easy. It would be surprising if it had. The pre-war owner of large estates and of many slaves now finds that he has to work for his living. The transition is disagreeable to him, even though it may be held by those who retain an element of priggishness in their philosophy that the ultimate effect on the dispossessed landowners themselves will be a happy one. The stories set about by the disgruntled ex-landlords are already fading away as the truth of the various transactions becomes known. The pre-war owner, for instance, of Lany Castle, now the country seat of the Czechoslovak President, has himself repudiated the propagandist lie which alleged that he had been dispossessed without fair compensation. On the contrary, he has stated, he was not only fairly compensated,

but was paid the price he himself asked for as compensation.

"After the war," Dr. Hodža has stated to the present writer, "we should have directly provoked the agricultural masses if we had not passed our laws on land reform. We gave the masses a direct and real interest in private ownership. The reform was no confiscation. In accordance with our law, the landed proprietors receive for their soil an equivalent in long-term State Bonds on the basis of the prices prevailing in 1913–1915, besides rebates for the capital levy and compensation for investments. That gives them not only 100 per cent., but 200 per cent. The objection has been raised that the current prices ought to be paid. This suggestion involves considerable difficulties, and might have extremely unpleasant results for the landed proprietors. The current prices would have to be reckoned on the basis of the land tax, which is assessed according to the net yield recorded in the 'cadastre' (the land register from Austria-Hungary). It is no secret that the morality of taxation is not always what it should be, and that the yield accorded in the cadastre was considerably lower than it actually amounted to. Consequently, the taxation was lower, and therefore the current prices would also be lower than we fixed them by law, according to the actual average between 1913 and 1915.

"There are, of course, bound to be cases of incidental injustice in the application of so large a reform. Such cases can be, and are, either adjusted privately, or submitted to our Supreme Court of Law. On the whole, the land reform, if it has meant hardship to some hundreds of landowners, has provided land for 450,000 people, and has fortified the present democracy, a pillar against Bolshevism, in Czechoslovakia and throughout Central Europe."

(iii) DR. TUKA

It seems necessary, if one is to preserve one's faith in Czechoslovak human nature, that something should go wrong in Czechoslovakia. The case of Dr. Vojtech Tuka therefore has its higher value.

Dr. Tuka is an exception to the uniformity with which harmony, racial and international, is produced in that country. For ten years we have witnessed a pacific consolidation in a portion of Central Europe where such consolidation was difficult, and where the achievement was thrown into relief by the opposite phenomenon all round. We have seen the Czechoslovak Government make diplomatic or commercial treaties with every country in Europe, balance its budget, increase its budget surplus, for instance, from a surplus of 26,000,000 crowns in 1928 to one of 35,500,000 crowns in 1929, stabilise its currency, pay off its foreign loans and substitute loans at a cheaper rate. We have seen Germans and Czechs in the West, and Slovaks and Magyars in the East, of the country giving an object lesson to every Continental country in the way to remove minority problems.

But there remains Dr. Tuka. He is a small matter, but in such a background even a small matter deserves attention. He is a Magyar, or at any rate he always called himself a Magyar. Before Central Europe was reformed he was a professor at the Hungarian University of Bratislava. After the reformation, when Bratislava became the capital of Slovakia, he still for some years clung to his Magyar loyalties, but in 1921 threw in his lot with the Slovak People's Party. He threw it in so well and with such effect that he rose to a position of

responsibility in the party. He was returned to Parliament as the Member for Košice.

It has none the less been an open secret that his heart has been on the other side of the frontier, and that in his heart he has regarded the relations of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, not as a means of neighbourly understanding, but as a proper object of mischief. He has, in fact, for several years been suspected by loyal Slovaks of being in the pay of the Hungarian Government.

The suspicion itself came to a head in November 1928, when the judicial authorities informed the Privileges Committee of the Chamber that a *prima facie* case had been established for proceedings against Dr. Tuka on a charge of treason—that is, of active intrigue against the safety of the State. Dr. Tuka, as a member of Parliament, was immune from arrest. The Privileges Committee, having deliberated for several weeks, decided on December 18th to suspend the privilege of immunity in Dr. Tuka's case, and thus to enable the judicial authorities to proceed against him in the normal manner. He was arrested and imprisoned at Bratislava.

The Slovak paper *Prudy*, of Bratislava, published in January 1929 an article about Dr. Tuka which illustrated the sort of reputation attaching to him, and gave some further information about his activities. "Spectators of public life in Slovakia (ran a passage of the article) have noticed for several years past that in the People's Party, and in fact in a prominent part of it, there is a man who is an enemy of the common life of the Czechs and Slovaks. His significance in the People's Party is best shown by the circumstance that he is the editor of the official political daily of the Party, and is thus, to all intents and purposes, responsible for the tactics of the political struggle. It has long been known

that Tuka specialised in forcing the leaders of the People's Party and its electorate to adopt various measures which were not favourable to the consolidation of Slovakia. Of the mischief detrimental to the national idea which has been perpetrated by Dr. Tuka in secret behind the political scenes, we still know very little. But Tuka felt so safe in his activities that he subscribed his own name to a number of activities. Thus, under his own name in the *Slovak* he cast aspersions on the struggle abroad for a Czechoslovak State by attempting to show that a Slovak who was forced to fight under the leadership of Austrian Generals was in the same position as those who fought voluntarily in the Czechoslovak legions. There resulted a spontaneous demonstration against him and his paper, and an attack was made upon the editorial offices of the *Slovak*."

(iv) DR. ŠVEHLA

Apart from Dr. Tuka, Czechoslovak life pursues the peculiarly even tenour of its way. The resignation of the Prime Minister, Dr. Švehla, had been expected for so long that when it took place in the first week of February, 1929, the regret it caused had already been transformed into a mellow respect for what he had done for Czechoslovakia. He had been unwell since the beginning of 1928, and the post of acting Prime Minister had in the meantime been filled by Monsignor Šramek, the leader of the Czech Clericals. After the local elections had been held at the beginning of December, it became clear that the appointment of a new Prime Minister could no longer be delayed.

Dr. Švehla was a "safe" Prime Minister, admirably suited by temperament to help in the process of political consolidation and economic progress that has been a

feature of the Republic. He has had three periods of office as Prime Minister, amounting in aggregate length to six out of the total ten years of the Republic's course.

His popularity was increased, as often happens in human affairs, by one of the weaknesses of his mental equipment. He is unusually absent-minded. To be always losing one's spectacles in a commonplace misfortune that befalls absent-minded people. The greatness of Dr. Švehla was revealed in the remedy he adopted during his office as Prime Minister. He had a relay of some dozen pairs of spectacles, which were placed in a row on his writing-table when he started his day's work, it being a routine duty of his servants, if and when they should find a pair of spectacles, to restore them to the row aforesaid, and to make a particular point of seeing that the row was complete every morning. Rows of things became a permanent feature of Dr. Švehla's office. In addition to an absent mind and an impatience of resultant delay, he had a prejudice against pens and a liking for pencils. Unfortunately his hand was heavy in the execution. If a pencil point were made short for him, it quickly disappeared under the abnormal wear and tear. If it were made long, it quickly broke. The solution of the dilemma was sought and found in the provision each morning of a long line of medium-sharpened pencils, stretching across his table from side to side, parallel to the shorter line of spectacles. There was still a third row of instruments lined across his table in readiness for each morning's work—a row, namely, of ten cigars. Dr. Švehla smokes too much, and it happened that his doctor advised him not to smoke more than ten cigars a day. The ten were methodically lined up, a strict ration for the day.

CHAPTER EIGHT: JUGOSLAVIA

§ 1. The Three Branches of the Southern Slavs

THE word Jugoslavia, of which the literal meaning is "the Southern Slav country," is the name colloquially given to one of the new States resulting from the disruption of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The official name of the State is the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kraljevina Srba Hrvata i Slovenaca). Before the war the Servs lived in the independent Kingdom of Servia (the names being changed to Serbs and Serbia during the war); the Croats were subjects of the Kingdom of Hungary; and the Slovenes were subjects of the Austrian Empire. When after the war the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary was broken up, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia were united, and Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina joined with them to constitute the independent Jugoslavia. The new State was a constitutional hereditary Monarchy, the Crown and parliament (the Skupština) together forming the legislature. Party politics were, however, suspended at the beginning of 1929, when the King carried out a *coup d'état*, dissolved parliament, abrogated the Constitution, and imposed a personal dictatorship.

§ 2. Some Jugoslav Politicians

(M. Račić, M. Radić, M. Pribičević, M. Vukičević, Father Korošec, King Alexander)

"Unhappily," wrote Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson soon after King Alexander abolished the Jugoslav constitution at the beginning of 1929, "the statesmen who

controlled Jugoslavia's destinies in the post-war period were less worthy of the occasion than the soldiers who had endured to victory or than the peasant masses who made victory possible; and the new Constitution of 1921 was framed on exaggerated centralist lines such as placed undue power in the hands of an incompetent clique in Belgrade, and speedily produced deterioration in all branches of the administration—especially in the former Austro-Hungarian provinces, which were accustomed to more ordered and efficient methods."

The politicians of Jugoslavia are not a cheerful subject of study. On June 20th, 1928, a battle of abuse developed in the Skupština between the Croats and the Radicals, during the course of which a Montenegrin Radical, M. Puniša Račić, suddenly jumped up and demanded that an immediate stop be put to what he called the insults of the Opposition. He had completely lost his temper. He shouted, "If no one is ready to punish Radić, I will do it myself," and, drawing a revolver, shot at the Opposition benches. Two men were killed, M. Pavle Radić (nephew of the Croat leader) and Dr. Basariček, and three, including the Croat leader, M. Stephen Radić himself, were badly wounded. The assailant disappeared in the confusion that followed, but appeared four hours later at the Ministry of the Interior and demanded to see the Minister. He was arrested.

That incident was unusually violent, but by no means unprecedented. During recent years several deputies have been shot in the Jugoslav parliament, as in other parliaments of South-eastern Europe. The murderer of June 20th, 1928, had an ugly record of atrocity in the Balkan wars. Two members of the Skupština, accused of complicity in the murders, were allowed to

hide behind their immunity as deputies, and were not released from that immunity until the Croat Press had lashed itself into a fury of indignation. During August a further political murder was committed, this time in Zagreb, and the tone of at least one journal of "opinion" bordered upon an open incitement to further murder.

When on the evening of January 5th, 1929, King Alexander decided to put an end to a political crisis in Jugoslavia by abrogating the 1921 constitution, suspending parliament, and appointing an arbitrary Ministry to carry out his decrees, pending the formulation of a new constitution, the humdrum democratic progressives throughout the world could not find a good word to say for him. Their instinct was no doubt sound in one sense, that dictatorships are a denial of liberty and that liberty is the first need of all healthy people. But what is "liberty"? It is arguable that liberty is a condition inversely proportionate to the scope of government. Democracy is a doubtful instrument of the common good because mass activity is bound, by the nature of man, to be a muddle and a conflict. No two people ever agree about anything. How then can one expect a whole nation to agree about anything? Kings are excellent institutions, if only because they are lifted above politics and are professionally engaged in considering their people's common interests. They sometimes betray their trust, as the King of Greece betrayed his trust, and by descending to political partisanship produce strife instead of averting it; but to take an example of another sort, the British King is an admirably unifying power, precisely because he is non-controversial. The popular adoration of the Royal Family in Great Britain is an invaluable asset to the British nation. Fortunately party politics in Great Britain have attained

a certain maturity, their grosser edges have been worn smooth. King George the Fifth therefore can beneficially carry out his duties as a constitutional Monarch. In Jugoslavia, by contrast, party politics by the end of 1928 had defeated their object. They no longer served, but damaged, the common interests of the country. The philosophical question raised by King Alexander's coup is therefore at least difficult to answer.

King Alexander certainly appears to have taken a broad view of the nation's interests. One can hardly form such an opinion of any Jugoslav politician, except perhaps of Father Korošec. Just before he decided to abolish the constitution, King Alexander, in the first week of January 1929, tried by conference with the Croat leaders to loosen the Serbo-Croat deadlock, but the parochial obstinacy of the Croat politicians was adamant, their blood too hot.

One does not blame the Croat politicians more than the Serb. The narrow Serb outlook of M. Pašić —the "Grand Old Man" of Serbia—had been as responsible for the friction between Belgrade and Zagreb as the policy of Croat obstruction adopted by M. Radić, the Croat leader. The difficulties were deepened by past divergencies of constitutional, psychological and religious practice in the two branches of the Jugoslav race. One of the peculiar incentives to political passion in Jugoslavia is precisely the combination of past divergencies with a permanent interdependence and need of coalescence.

The difficulties of the political leaders in Jugoslavia are therefore abnormally great. When a former Minister of Justice, M. Grisogono, was sincerely examining in the Skupština the problem of the central prison in Belgrade (the Glavniacha), where third degree methods

are pushed by the police to the length of flogging, two Montenegrin deputies provoked a free fight and put an end to all serious discussion. When at the end of 1927 the Finance Minister, Dr. Bogdan Marković, honestly tried to do what no other Finance Minister had tried to do, by balancing his Budget and at the same time adjusting certain notorious grievances resulting from the incidence of income tax, he was completely baulked by the stupidities of the Opposition, whose only concern appeared to be to oppose whatever the Government might try to do. The situation was that those parts of Jugoslavia which formerly belonged to Austria-Hungary had borne more than their fair share of taxation in the Jugoslav State. They, in fact, paid the whole income tax, and the old Serbs paid none whatever. What the Opposition proposed was that income tax be abolished altogether, a pleasant expedient which they argued (with logic enough) would meet the grievance of the provinces without affecting the old Serbs. As, however, Dr. Marković could not, even on the existing basis of taxation, balance his Budget without imposing a drastic cut of 10 per cent. on all Government departments, the attitude of the Opposition was merely destructive; but M. Radić, the Croat leader, and M. Pribičević, the Serb champion of the Croats, both threatened to withdraw from the committee, from the Skupština and from Belgrade unless their demand were conceded.

M. Pribičević is one of the most interesting personalities in Jugoslav politics. His main ambition is to defend the Croats; but his habit of defence has led him to try to stop anything and everything that the Serbs might want to do. His championship of Croatia is based on the ethical purpose of defending the rights of

minorities. Now Macedonia is notoriously in need of help from Belgrade. When a special grant of 12,000,000 dinars was voted to Macedonian improvement, however, M. Pribičević valiantly objected on the ground that Jugoslavia treated its minorities better than any country in the world except perhaps Czechoslovakia. Soon after that occasion he was protesting (January 3rd, 1929) that the new provinces of Jugoslavia, which before the war had looked to Belgrade as to the Jugoslav Piedmont, had found after the war that the Belgrade régime was worse than that of Vienna.

The way in which the political vendetta between Belgrade and Zagreb developed in 1928 illustrates political practice at its worst. M. Radić and M. Pribičević started an inflammatory campaign throughout Croatia. M. Pribičević declared on one occasion—and the statement was typical of the campaign—that "the present rulers in Belgrade are barbarians against whom the cultural institutions of the new territories must be protected." The Prime Minister, M. Vukičević, who was concerned to stop such speeches, took the step within a few days of M. Pribičević's declaration just quoted of offering to M. Radić's party three portfolios in the Government. M. Radić, instead of responding to so magnanimous an impulse, merely felt that his position was thereby strengthened and refused to enter M. Vukičević's Ministry unless he took M. Pribičević with him, a condition which in the circumstances M. Vukičević could not consider.

On the occasion of the Skupština shootings King Alexander behaved well. In the alarm and indignation that spread through Jugoslavia he did all he could to quieten nerves. He went at once to see M. Radić as he lay in bed, and arranged for the Vienna specialist

who had attended Dr. Seipel when an attempt was made on his life to hurry to Belgrade by aeroplane.

The emotional disturbance, however, was too great to be thus arrested. The deputies of the Croat Peasant Party withdrew to Zagreb and announced that they could have no further relations with Belgrade, or at any rate with the Vukičević Government of Belgrade. Oddly enough, it was the Radić–Pribičević combination that now remained as the political connecting link between Serbs and Croats; for M. Pribičević is a Serb, an intensely national Serb, who had been prepared to join forces with M. Radić in a campaign for the redress of Croat wrongs, but who could never contemplate a Serb-Croat rupture. M. Pribičević, indeed, in his own person illustrates Dr. Seton-Watson's diagnosis of an inextricably mingled race. A further illustration of the same phenomenon was provided by the person of Father Korošec, the Slovene Clerical leader, who was Minister of the Interior in the Vukičević Ministry.

The tension between Croats and Serbs, for which the original responsibility must be largely attributed to M. Pašić, but which was undoubtedly increased by M. Radić's own inclination to intransigence—the political leaders on both sides were something less than first-rate politicians—had thus been strained to breaking point by the action of a notoriously wild and bloodthirsty Montenegrin who had made a reputation for atrocity in the Balkan wars. The widow of the murdered Pavle Radić set an example of Christianity and of common sense by publicly appealing that her husband's death should be made the occasion, not for hatred, but for a new start in brotherly love between Serb and Croat. King Alexander, whose every action in this horrible crisis revealed a sense of decency and a longing for

something better in his kingdom, tried to second Madame Radić's appeal by begging her to give him the honour of educating her two children.

At the end of July 1928 a Government was formed out of the four biggest parties by none other than Father Korošec, whose success produced an unexpected new reaction on the part of M. Radić and M. Pribičević. M. Radić had had all the limelight in a straight political fight between Serbs and Croats. The emergence of a Slovene Clerical as the head of a new Government had the simple but curious effect on M. Radić of making him resent the intrusion of a third factor, which might conceivably militate against the gratifying localisation which had so far characterised the conflict. M. Pribičević, who had by this time lost all enthusiasm in life except that of acting as watchdog in defence of Croatia Slavonia, unhesitatingly took his cue from M. Radić, and roundly refused to recognise Father Korošec, on the (to him) sufficient and perfect ground that Father Korošec in the rôle of Prime Minister constituted a "provocation to all Croats." There is something attractive in M. Pribičević's ruthlessness of loyalty to his friends, but it had its limitations as a contribution to practical politics.

Father Korošec none the less got to work. He summoned a meeting of the Skupština for August 1st, and began the proceedings by a wholly appropriate condemnation of the June murders. Zagreb meanwhile was intent on prosecuting the quarrel. A rival parliament was formed, also on August 1st, in the old Croatian Diet in Zagreb, by eighty of the eighty-five seceding deputies from Belgrade. The Zagreb "parliament" referred to Belgrade as a "rump parliament," formally declared the abrogation of the existing constitution, and

postulated the reconstitution of the whole state. M. Pribičević was as violent as ever. Presiding over the assembly in M. Radić's absence, he made a speech of which the point was that it was not only the Croats, but all Serbs outside old Serbia (that is, the Serbs of Croatia, Voivodina, Dalmatia and Bosnia) who condemned the Belgrade Skupština and refused to accept its authority. He made a notable addition to his *obiter dicta* about Belgrade by observing that in the Belgrade Skupština "the argument was decided not by reason, but by weapons."

M. Radić, whose already delicate health had been further weakened by the Skupština outrage, even though the actual wound had healed, died suddenly on August 8th. His last act, or his last known act (for it was embodied in his will), was one of the best things he did: he nominated as his successor at the head of the Croat Peasant Party by far the most enlightened politician in Croatia—namely, Dr. Trumbić, who had worked hard for the cause of Jugoslav solidarity and independence during the war, and who was the first Jugoslav Foreign Minister (1918–1920).

The funeral of Stephen Radić, which was attended by nearly a quarter of a million of people, and from which Serb official representation was rejected, marked the definite beginning of an era in which Croat discontent crystallised into a demand for decentralisation on extreme federalist lines.

For the rest of the year 1928 the deadlock between Zagreb and Belgrade not only persisted, but hardened. M. Pribičević, it is true, showed some reaction, and at last broke partially away from Croat propaganda. The death of Stephen Radić had undoubtedly broken his most binding link with Zagreb, and the exaggerated

demands formulated by such Peasant leaders as M. Maček, M. Predavec, and M. Krnievič—who went to the length of postulating virtual independence—could not be harmonised with the Pribičević principle of Serbo-Croat solidarity, a principle from which he had never swerved. Those Croat leaders in public statements at one time committed themselves to a policy of a separate parliament, a separate army, a separate control of foreign affairs. They refused to be represented in Jugoslav delegations abroad. When, however, Italian opinion began to draw conclusions from such wild statements, M. Maček was galvanised into something more realistic, and he issued a deliberate statement to the effect that no Croat wanted to disturb the existing conception of a unified Jugoslav state, but demanded only full equality with the Serbs within the State organism. Therein was revealed, as is always revealed in an extremity, the basic sentiment which binds Croat with Serb, for good, for ill.

During November the Belgrade authorities showed some nervous inconsistency, at one time threatening to prosecute the Croat leaders for sedition, at another promising to meet their wishes half-way by a measure of decentralisation involving Croat autonomy. On December 1st two people were killed in Zagreb in some grimly ironic rioting that took place while the tenth anniversary was being celebrated of Serb-Croat-Slovene unity. During these gradually worsening conditions King Alexander remained silent, but it was inferred that he was thinking the more. The appointment of a soldier on December 7th as Governor of the Zagreb district seemed to be a straw in the wind, a straw which also indicated the instability of Croat feeling. Indignation was expressed in Zagreb against the appointment

of a soldier to a civil post, the ground of the indignation being that the appointment was tantamount to a violation of the constitution. Yet for five months Croat spokesmen had been claiming that the constitution was dead, and on one occasion made the definite submission that "there was no longer a constitution, but only a King and his people." Who knows but that such statements sowed in the mind of the King the seed which bore fruit on January 5th?

The culminating crisis arose on December 30th, when the Belgrade Government resigned. The Coalition of Radicals and Democrats had split over the appointment of a military Governor of Zagreb and the general question of Croat grievances. M. Vukičević himself, supported by Father Korošec, withstood the Democrat demand for a more conciliatory policy, holding the view that the situation could now be saved only by iron firmness. During the first week of January the King intervened by summoning to Belgrade the Croat leaders and discussing with them the possibility of a Serbo-Croat compromise. It was understood that the extremity of interpretation they placed upon the principle of federation convinced the King that for the time being political collaboration between Zagreb and Belgrade on the existing constitutional basis was out of the question. There was no prospect of any new Government being formed to take the place of that which resigned on December 30th. An ominous suspense seemed to paralyse Belgrade.

It was then that the King made the sudden decision to impose his personal dictatorship. During the night of Saturday to Sunday, January 5th to 6th, 1929, a Royal Proclamation was posted throughout Belgrade in these terms: "In order as quickly as possible to bring about the formation of those institutions, that State

administration, and that organisation of the State which best answer the general needs of the nation and the interests of the State, I have decided that the Constitution of the Serb, Croat and Slovene Kingdom of June 28th, 1921, ceases to be valid. All the laws of the land will remain in force until suspended by decree. New laws will be promulgated in the same manner. (Signed) ALEXANDER."

The above events have been chronicled in some detail to show the state of political chaos prevailing in Jugoslavia. There are no outstanding personalities in the country's political life; the general level of political form is low; political controversy has involved several murders within twelve months. Can serious people be altogether disappointed if the King of that country has forcibly suppressed the Skupština for a period? Would that some omnipotence could suppress the whole body of European politics for a season!

King Alexander's personal régime in Jugoslavia started in a purely destructive spirit. Dictatorships normally begin by destroying the existing régime. Even before the Dictatorship had lasted a week, a police order was issued to the effect that all political parties throughout the kingdom should submit to headquarters a full statement of their political aims, their rules, their officers, and what not, it being at the same time proclaimed that any party which failed to obey that order was thereby automatically dissolved, and any attempt to maintain it would be a transgression of the Dictator's law. Thereafter the process of political suppression moved quickly. On January 20th an edict was issued from Zagreb, on the authority of the Dictator's commissioner, dissolving all political parties whose names included the word "Croat." The Peasant Party thereby ceased to exist.

Two days later the Government ordained the immediate dissolution of the Slovene Clerical Party and the Slovene Peasant Party, and every Zionist organisation throughout the country. After another interval of two days all the surviving political parties, Radical, Agrarian, Democrat, were similarly suppressed, as were also the student political clubs.

By way of comic relief in so flattening a process of destruction, King Alexander, on January 24th, the day when the suppression of the political organisation was completed, invited the general body of foreign journalists who remained in Belgrade to go and see him. He gave them an interview. All that he said, or all that they were allowed to say that he said, was that he accepted full personal responsibility for everything he had done. Whether he meant that he was in full possession of his own mental faculties, or whatever else he meant, it was clearly a waste of time to invite a body of foreign journalists to be given such news. It could reasonably be taken for granted that when a king performs a *coup d'état*, abolishes the constitution, and proclaims that the country henceforward will be governed by his edicts alone, that king is acting on his own, and nobody else's responsibility.

It is agreeable to find an exception to the general quality of Jugoslav politicians. Dr. Momčilo Ninčić, former Professor of Political Economy and Financial Science at Belgrade University, and Jugoslav Foreign Minister, is a rare type of Balkan statesman. He has helped Dr. Beneš and Dr. Seipel to replace the spirit of war with the spirit of peace in South-eastern Europe. He has been a pillar of the Little Entente, has consolidated Jugoslav friendliness with Austria, Bulgaria, Greece and even Italy, has done admirable work at Geneva, helped Hungary to obtain a loan, and generally

produced such an atmosphere of reason and peace in Jugoslav foreign policy that the effects of internal dissension in Jugoslavia were lessened, the value of the Dinar went up, and one of Europe's danger spots was made less dangerous. No man need wish a better record.

CHAPTER NINE: GREECE

§ 1. A Divided State

PARTY politics in Greece are of little general interest except as an example of the depressing Balkan tradition in that field. The overshadowing interest of modern Greece has centred in Eleftherios Veniselos, about whom some personal facts are recorded in the pages that follow. Since September 29th, 1925, Greece has been a Republic, the Monarchy having succumbed to the internal strife and foreign complications largely caused by the King's own folly. The general tone and quality of Veniselos on the one hand and of Greek politics on the other will become apparent in the course of what follows.

§ 2. Eleftherios Veniselos

Eleftherios Veniselos is known by repute and by his person to probably more people in the world than any other living statesman. He is distinguished. His face, the way he walks, the swiftness and eagerness with which he speaks, the fire, magnetism, yet childlike simplicity of his eyes, his courtesy, the indefinable charm of the man are such that, once known, they are not forgotten. His competence in affairs, his courage, the way he has of getting what he wants for Greece are aspects of his essential quality of statesmanship. His motives as a statesman are conventional and even ordinary; his methods are magnificent. He is not a pacifist, although he was not ashamed of, and did not attempt to conceal, his tears when he contemplated the enrolment of Greek peasants as soldiers in the Anatolian war. He is singularly impersonal, is a living example of the

unconscious dignity which is the true dignity; and his simplicity is such that it sometimes surprises those whose notions of simplicity have not been derived from the contemplation of so extreme an example. When, for instance, in 1928 he decided that an existing Ministry was impossible because he himself was not a member of it, and took immediate steps to replace it with a Ministry of his own, he acted with a complete lack of self-consciousness and a complete detachment from himself which made him regard himself, from the outside, as the man who happened to be the most needed by Greece.

It was a similar motive that led him to set up a provisional government during the War. He had made up his mind that Greece had no expedient alternative to taking a belligerent part in the war on the anti-German side; the reigning dynasty being a German dynasty, he took the logical, bold and gigantic step of setting himself up as the government of Greece and of leading Greece into the war without further ado. He succeeded. After the war he came to the conclusion that Turkish power in Europe should be abolished, and that Greece should overflow into Smyrna, all for the purpose of improving the general condition of the Near East by diminishing Turkey's power of doing harm. His policy was imperialist, its scope was vast. Yet he swept all before him at the Paris Conference because his arguments and personal attractiveness were alike irresistible, and because he had the instinctive sense of tactics which bade him always ask for just a little less than at the time he was likely to be granted, and gradually to enlarge the good work. The Treaty of Sèvres was a personal achievement; but the Greek people were not as great as Veniselos believed them to be, and the elements of the succeeding tragedy were present from the beginning.

M. VENISELOS

Veniselos is a bad judge of other people's character. Simple people generally are, for the reason that it is not in them to suspect others of less straightforwardness than they evince themselves. Their straightforwardness is un-selfconscious, and that is why they take for granted the like quality in others. Veniselos's fall in 1920 was due partly to the disloyal good-for-nothings he had enrolled among his entourage in Athens who betrayed him at home while he was working for Greece abroad, partly to his magnanimity in releasing all his political opponents who were in prison to enable them to record their vote against him. That act in itself was a commonplace measure of fair play, but it was too exalted for Greek political standards. Veniselos has never to this day seen the faults of the country he serves, the country which more than once has betrayed him.

It was in the autumn of 1920 that the Greek electorate, by a freak of perversity which first surprised and then revolted all serious people, not only humiliated their great statesman, one of the great statesmen of our time, but turned against him a fury of resentment, wholly irrelevant and blind as it was, such as made him flee the country for his life. It was not surprising that he thereupon announced his final abdication of politics. Yet it was no more surprising—for of such a quality he was universally known to be—that he spent all his reason and his power of appeal in pleading against the universal contempt into which his country had fallen. He defended those who had betrayed and wronged him. He adduced arguments, cast in the impersonal charm which always characterised his diplomacy, to prove that the Greek cause was as good as ever, the Greek people as worthy of confidence as ever. He accepted difficult diplomatic missions abroad, difficult

precisely because of his own political extinction by the Greek people. He accepted those missions from his enemy Government at home, which felt the ground swiftly disappearing from under its feet, and cast aside whatever pride it may have felt. Those who knew Veniselos in his exile knew the sorrow he suffered, not on his own, but on his country's behalf. Those who did not know him found in him a dogged champion of his own enemies, and could not understand.

When Ronald Burrows, the greatest friend of Veniselos, was dying in May 1920, the San Remo Conference was just over, and Veniselos was at the height of his diplomatic triumphs. Burrows, knowing that he was dying, wrote a farewell letter to Veniselos, which Veniselos later described as a "prophetic warning, as though some foreknowledge was granted to him." It was six months before the Greek election took place, when probably no political student in the entire world expected anything to go wrong. Burrows in his letter first subscribed to that general assumption, and then mysteriously and, as it proved, prophetically contradicted the assumption. "I see (he wrote) from a telegram that you are taking back the good news in triumph to Greece. That is your last battle, the re-creation of a united Hellas. I have no doubt that you will sweep the polls again at the election, but there is something harder to do, to convert the ignorant, obstinate and often well-meaning folk whose whole outlook was perverted and turned to bitterness by the Royalist struggle. You are still, thank God, young and strong, and you can do such mighty things these next ten years if you have the whole nation behind you. It is not only that I have unbounded faith in you, my Pericles, but I love Hellas as a whole, and I love those dear people, many of them friends of mine

in the past, and cannot bear that they should be so blind. Ah, well! It may be that your sweet reasonableness will win them in the end." *

The last two sentences were puzzling at the time, but were proved true to history as yet unfolded. At the end of 1920 Veniselos was driven into the wilderness, and the fortunes of Greece began to ebb.

The further elections of December 1923 cut short the exile which had been decreed for Veniselos three years earlier. After the November elections of 1920 he vowed that he would never again take part in politics. He married and retired to private life in the Riviera and in Paris. The rebel Veniselos of the Cretan hills seemed to have undergone a metamorphosis. The pain caused him by the repudiation of the Greek people at the very height of his achievement had a visible physical effect, and he seemed thinner and even smaller in stature; but no word ever escaped him of criticism of his fellow-countrymen who had deserted him. On the contrary, he spent his time in exile making eager appeals on their behalf, even attempting to justify the elections of 1920 and the treatment he had received. His grief was intensified by the helplessness with which he had to watch from abroad the gradual crumbling of the work he had been able to do for Greece, the gradual estrangement of all the Powers, the disastrous war in Anatolia and the complete turning of the tables between Athens and Angora.

When, in 1922, the Revolutionary Government which had replaced the Constantinist Government of M. Gounaris asked him to undertake a sort of roving Ambassadorship for Greece, he unhesitatingly forgot his vow and accepted the post. He represented Greece at the

* See "Ronald Burrows: A Memoir," p. xiii.

Lausanne Conference, and succeeded against all the odds in saving something from the wreck. None the less, the Treaty of Sèvres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne, by which the Turks recovered most of their losses, and the Greeks lost everything that had been won for them by Veniselos, and more besides. When finally, at the end of 1923, the Greek Government sent a deputation to him begging him to return to Athens, he forgot still more of his vow and yielded. He still made the reservation that he would not accept any political office in Athens, but would act only in a consultative capacity by conferring with all the political leaders. Some of his incorrigible enemies were openly imputing Republican designs to him, and they were the main reason as well as the justification of his decision not to take office. Two other reasons which contributed to his decision were: (1) that he believed unity to be the essential condition of Greek recovery, and he himself, being identified in the past with the struggle against the King, might perhaps cause further division; (2) that he was strongly of opinion that any constitutional change in Greece ought to be effected only by constitutional means, and that the people's wish should be expressed freely through a Constituent National Assembly, without any coaching from any quarter. The failure, however, of both M. Roussos and General Danglis to form a Government left him with no alternative to assuming the Prime Ministership himself. That he did on January 11th, 1924. It was against his interests, but his own interests did not weigh with him. Veniselos again being Prime Minister of Greece, Greek fortunes at once began to rise. On January 15th—four days after he formed his Government—the British Government renewed diplomatic relations, which had been

abnormal since November 1920. The influence recaptured by Veniselos in 1923 was comparable with his influence in 1910, when he first went to Greece as a national leader.

Within a few months Veniselos was again virtually banished from Greece, this time for preventing his headstrong countrymen from resorting to an unconstitutional method of dethroning the Glucksburg dynasty. The political pendulum swings violently in Greece. The renewed enthusiasm for Veniselos had led to an unbalanced haste to banish the King. Veniselos was thereby driven to the ironic pass of defending the King and the constitution against the uncontrolled supporters of himself.

It is not a new, but it is as pronounced a Greek characteristic to-day as ever it was, that emotion is the decisive factor in any Greek political crisis. This national characteristic is mostly harmless except when a leader arises of outstanding ability. When, however, a really great man arises, he is apt to appear to Greek opinion to be essentially " barbarian " in the Greek sense of the word, for the simple reason that he differs from themselves. The Greek repudiation of Veniselos in 1920 was paid for by one of the greatest examples of nemesis in the world's history, and every Greek, with his traditional sense of tragedy, understood the relation between the cause and the effect. Yet even that perfect sense of tragedy cannot save a Greek from repeating the same cycle of tragedy and putting it all down to fate. In the present instance, the understanding of the tragic course of events between 1920 and 1923 was so general and so profound that Veniselos was brought back to Greece on a wave of repentance and of necessity such as gave him all his old power in Athens. Yet the Æschylean cycle

of wrong and counter wrong, each automatically punished, was again enacted in Athens. It was forsooth the Glucksburg dynasty that deep down had been the cause of the Greek undoing and of the wrong to Veniselos. "Punish the Glucksburgs, out with them without delay!" was the cry at the beginning of 1924.

Veniselos, who combined his Greek enthusiasm with the vision of the old Greek chorus, saw that so precipitate a course would, in its turn, bring a further nemesis, and cautioned his countrymen against it. Even he was unable to stem the tide. He stuck to his convictions, although he knew it would be fatal to himself. Twice in five years Veniselos had sacrificed himself on the altar of patriotism and had been misunderstood by the Greek people. After 1920 he defended the Greek people against the universal criticism passed on them for their treatment of himself. In 1924 he defended the constitution, and appeared to his short-sighted critics to be defending his traditional enemy, the King. In both cases the Greek people did the headstrong thing and forgot their Veniselos. It was to no purpose that on January 19th, 1924, he pronounced himself a Republican, and asked only that Republicanism should be achieved through the available method of the constitution. The end could have been attained by the right or by the wrong method. He stood for the right, they for the wrong, method. With their hereditary impulsiveness, they swept Veniselos aside, and on March 10th, 1924, he again left Greece to resume his exile.

By the end of 1926 there was little left of what Veniselos had built, and the country was almost completely stultified by internal dissension. There then followed, as if from sheer exhaustion, a period of calm, during which a coalition of all the parties held the reins of

government. The violent passion of political vendetta was allayed, Royalists and Veniselists proclaimed a kind of truce; few false steps were taken in foreign diplomacy or in domestic policy; the League of Nations and the United States were attracted to help financially in the reconstruction of the national finances—which had gone down in the general wreck—and in the heartbreaking work of settling on Greek soil the million or so refugees who were uprooted from Anatolia after the Lausanne Conference had rewritten the Treaty of Sèvres.

Calm, however, was foreign to the Greek temperament, and the pendulum swung again. In the spring of 1928 party passions began to exert a strain on the Coalition, and the spectre of another and possibly more disastrous dictatorship began to loom ahead. In those circumstances Veniselos from his exile home showed signs of self-contradictory emotions. He repeated his protest that he would never return to Greek politics; he did all he could to inspire confidence in the existing Government, thereby indirectly playing a part in the very politics he had banished; and within four months, the said Coalition Government having fallen, and the impetus to bring back Veniselos having swept everything before it, Veniselos himself had again formed a Government.

The first serious danger to the Coalition emerged in May 1928, when certain interested organs in Athens propagated the notion that the Government's failure to pass an Act for the setting up of the Senate had brought against it the hostility of certain sections of the Army. It was then for the first time seriously suggested in Athens that Veniselos might be induced, on grounds of patriotism, to break his vow and return to Greece. The road back to Athens was not a smooth road. The

Liberal Party, which Veniselos had led till 1920, had itself broken in the subsequent dissensions of Greek politics, and had split into two sections, divided precisely by their attitude to their former chief. The section of the party which remained loyal to Veniselos was led by M. Michalakopoulos, who held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in the Coalition Cabinet. It retained simply the name of Liberal Party. It was numerically smaller than the other section, which called itself the Progressive Liberal Party, being "progressive" only in the sense that it deserted Veniselos. It was led by M. Kaphandaris, Minister of Finance in the Coalition Ministry.

As the crisis within the Ministry developed, and as the popular movement for the recall of Veniselos grew, M. Kaphandaris no doubt felt that some peculiar strain fell upon himself personally. On May 19th he announced his decision to resign his position as leader of the Progressive Liberals and therefore also his Cabinet position as Minister of Finance. His motive was explained as a desire to leave his party a free hand in deciding what their attitude was to be to Veniselos, he himself having decided to form a new party. Before formally resigning, however, at a meeting of the Progressive Liberal Party convened for May 22nd, he had an interview (May 20th) with M. Veniselos, the object of which, on the part of Veniselos, was to save both the old Liberal Party and the Coalition Government by reaching an amicable understanding with M. Kaphandaris, and on the part of M. Kaphandaris, as the event showed, to make his own position clear. The result of the interview was made known at the party meeting on May 22nd, at which M. Kaphandaris proclaimed that the Progressive Liberal Party never had been, in his view, a Veniselist party, but a departure from that party, and that he him-

self refused to accept the guidance of Veniselos. He therefore resigned the leadership of the party, and announced that he would form a new party. As his friends the Ministers of Public Health, War and Marine resigned from the Cabinet in his support, the Prime Minister, M. Zaimis, tendered the Cabinet's resignation to the President.

There followed the familiar scenes of Greek political excitement, Royalist outbursts against Veniselos, even General Metaxas, leader of the Moderate Royalists, declaring that he would never collaborate with Veniselos. Veniselos himself (May 23rd) proclaimed that his dual object in returning to politics was to save the Liberal Party and to prevent the reassertion of a dictatorship. He therefore resumed the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Now in one sense Veniselos is an extremist. When in exile, his determination was never again to return to Greek politics. Having now, under the force of circumstances, decided to abandon that attitude, and having therefore returned to Athens, his point of view simply was that he was about to be the paramount factor in Greek affairs. Anything short of predominance would never have occurred to him. He had assumed the leadership of the Liberal Party, and therefore took it for granted that he would be included in the next Ministry. Inclusion in the Ministry would be all that was necessary for him to exert the decisive influence. The simplicity of such an outlook, wholly consistent as it was with his character, was one aspect of his capacity for impersonal service in a cause. Modesty is a personal thing; it connotes a subjective self-consciousness, even though it be an attractive form of subjectivity. Veniselos's outlook is singularly impersonal. Realising that he could

put something right for Greece, he took the means for granted, and assumed himself without question to be in a position to carry it through. He is uncritical of the means to his own hand. Hence it was that in 1920 his own Cabinet contained traitors to himself, traitors so gross that a less simple and more suspicious soul would have detected them in a moment. Hence also it was that on the eve of the 1920 election he took so objective a view of what an election should be that he released all his political enemies from prison so that they might vote. They not only voted against him themselves, but, with truly Greek insatiableness, moved heaven and earth to prevent anybody's voting for him.

It happened at the end of May 1928 that there was some obstacle, not at first appreciated by him, against his becoming a member of the Cabinet at all. The party negotiations that followed the resignation of M. Zaimis and his Coalition Cabinet could result only (if they resulted in anything at all) in the formation of another Coalition Cabinet under M. Zaimis, because no single party could command a working majority in the Chamber. Veniselos's friends in the Chamber formed the strongest single group, but they did not constitute a majority. No combination of groups could form a Government unless the Royalists were included, and the Royalists, even the Metaxist section of them, refused to join any Government which included Veniselos. On May 28th M. Zaimis secured the collaboration of the Metazist Royalists only by omitting Veniselos from his Cabinet. Nor was that all. Veniselos, although leader of the Liberal Party, was not a deputy, and could not lead his party in the Chamber. A deputy-leader in the person of M. Sophoulis, President of the Chamber, had to be appointed to lead the party in Parliament.

The new Government was duly formed. Veniselos found himself helplessly outside. That to him was not a business-like state of affairs, and, with the same undisturbed impersonality, he proceeded to bring down the Government. On June 27th he publicly attacked the Government's floating of a £2,000,000 loan, wrote to the Finance Minister (again M. Kaphandaris) informing him that if he wished to avert a financial calamity he must drop the plan he had in mind and substitute another and wholly different plan of Veniselos's, there and then submitted; and roundly condemned him also for his settlement of the Greek debt to France.

Veniselos wrote so effectively that M. Kaphandaris promptly resigned (which was, no doubt, what Veniselos was aiming at) on June 28th, and the resignation of the whole Cabinet followed twenty-four hours later. So far, good. Without risking unnecessary complications, Veniselos thereupon, sublimely simple, made it known that he himself would form a Government if the President were to ask him to do so. The President duly asked him to do so. On July 4th Veniselos swore in a new Cabinet, complete with himself as Prime Minister. Not being a member of Parliament, his position was provisional and dependent on the ratification of the electorate. It probably never occurred to him that there could be any doubt about what the electorate would say. He took it all for granted. This time he was right. At the August election he swept the polls, the final figures being 686,463 (68 per cent.) for Veniselos, 328,550 (32 per cent.) for the Royalists. Veniselos had an overwhelming independent working majority in the House. There is something refreshing and irresistible in the way Veniselos triumphs.

In the autumn and winter of 1928–1929 Veniselos

gave us a vivid example of his thoroughness of method and determination of purpose in his pacific work. That episode in his career deserves to be looked at in some detail. He left hospital after a fever on Monday, September 17th, 1928. On Thursday of the same week (September 20th) he left Athens on a typical mission, of which the dual object was to pursue peace and to prevent misunderstanding of what he was doing. It was always one of the secrets of M. Veniselos's power that he took infinite pains in whatever he did. There is an artistic completeness in his technique. In the present case he was not well. He had been seriously ill, and had not had time to regain his strength. Yet the success of his plan could best be assured by his travelling in person, and in quick stages, to several countries abroad, and he faced the ordeal.

He thereby at a stroke achieved one part of his object, which was that he should not be misunderstood. He compelled attention. What he said in Rome, in Paris, in London, in Belgrade, was listened to by the whole world; and the stupid mischief-makers, who specialise in discovering and in propagating suspicion, were in his case confounded before they could get into their stride. There is abundant justification for M. Veniselos's diagnosis that one of the worst obstacles to peaceful constructive diplomacy is misunderstanding. We have had a surfeit of experience in that sense in the West of Europe. One of his principles is that it is not enough to be honestly pacific in intention. It is necessary also that not a shadow of excuse be left to anybody for misinterpreting that intention.

Veniselos reached Rome on September 23rd, and signed with Mussolini a Pact of Friendship, Conciliation and Arbitration. The pact had already (in accordance

with another of Veniselos's diplomatic principles) been fully negotiated. It is his principle to make sure before personally appearing abroad that the agreement he is about to clinch is certain to be clinched. The text of the Greco-Italian Pact had therefore been negotiated through the regular diplomatic channels before Veniselos left Athens. It was signed the day he arrived. He took the occasion to be interviewed in Rome, and made two points which had not been fully or generally understood about his policy. The first was that he had no desire to question any existing treaty; that Greece had no political interests in the Adriatic; that the Dodecanese was a question of exclusive concern to Italy and the Dodecanesians, that the Cypriot question concerned only the people of Cyprus and the people of Great Britain. The second was that his policy was to organise pacts of friendship, not alliances, because it is the essence of an alliance that it is directed against third parties.

From Rome he went to Paris, where his primary object was to explain to M. Briand and to Sir William Tyrrell the nature of his policy and to discuss its further stages with the Jugoslav Minister. From Paris he crossed to London (September 30th). He spent one full day in London (October 1st), in the course of which he saw Mr. Baldwin and Lord Cushendun, and left on the following day for Belgrade and Athens. When he was in London he looked pale and tired, but when he spoke, the old fire of his eagerness burned as brightly as ever.

His own words best express what was in his mind. His object, as he expressed it in conversation with the present writer on October 1st, was " to explain what I am doing, so as to nip in the bud those misunderstand-

ings which are the main obstacles to all diplomacy aiming at peace. The policy I am explaining," he said, " to the various Governments is simple. It is my object to link up the Balkans with all the neighbouring countries on a basis of friendship. A week yesterday I signed in Rome a pact of friendship. I am determined that no Government shall have any excuse for imagining that that pact is directed against any third party, or that my policy is anything but full, constructive peace all round. I have made the pact with Rome. I am starting to negotiate with Belgrade. In a few weeks I hope to sign a pact with Angora and with Sofia."

Speaking of the criticism that had been made in the West of Europe on the ground that his policy departed from the idea of a Balkan Locarno, he said, " What is the Locarno idea ? The Western Locarno is not directed against anybody. Consider this aspect of my policy. It happens that Turkey and Bulgaria are on good terms. The main difficulty against complete Balkan harmony at the present moment is the relationship between Jugoslavia and Bulgaria. Now if I succeed in making pacts with both Jugoslavia and Bulgaria, will not that perhaps provide a link between those two themselves ? My object is to have pacts of friendship, neutrality, and arbitration between Greece, Turkey, Italy, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria. If I succeed, you have the essence of a Balkan Locarno, for all the countries concerned will be pledged to keep the peace. If, by contrast, by the word ' Locarno ' for the Balkans is meant a Balkan alliance, than that is not my idea, because the essence of an alliance is that it is directed against someone." He explained that he was not going immediately to Angora, but hoped to go later. " When I was in Rome," he said, " Ismet Pasha's friendly invitation was

brought to me that I should visit Angora. I telegraphed that I should be delighted, but that I was too tired to extend my present itinerary, and hoped even to avoid having to go to London. It happens that I have had to come to London because Sir William Tyrrell was away from Paris. I also explained to Ismet that it would be better first to negotiate and agree on a pact through our Ministers, and then I would go to Angora, probably in a few weeks, to sign it. I added that if Ismet insisted I would go at once to Angora. When I reached Paris, Ismet's Minister handed me an answer in which, with pleasant courtesy, Ismet declared that in that case, of course, he insisted! But I expect to go there before long.

"Greece," added M. Veniselos, "has no object but to be at peace. We accept everything. Technically on the side of the Allies during the Great War, we were in effect beaten. Yet we accept every treaty, including the Treaty of Lausanne. I have no ambitions in Anatolia. I am at peace on the basis of the *status quo*. When, during the election just contested, the Anatolian migrants shouted to me, 'Restore us to our homes!' I answered that it was impossible. I am out to consolidate peace on the existing treaty basis, to have nothing to do with disturbing agitations. What the world wants, especially the Balkans, is simply rest and peace and confidence that there will be no more war. That is my object. That is what I am travelling to explain."

§ 3. A Climax of Political Levity

One of the incidents of contemporary European politics deserves to be kept prominently on record, as illustrating the depth to which political evil can fall.

It was established towards the end of 1922 that certain Cabinet Ministers in Athens had engineered a military defeat in the field as a political manœuvre for party purposes at home. The defeat itself was of less consequence than the cold-blooded sacrifice of Greek soldiers in the field. Those men and women who ever think about one of the most serious of human problems, the problem of war and peace, should read, mark, learn and digest this established case of human life being deliberately sacrificed for the cynical purposes of political intrigue. One of the permanent difficulties against maintaining the peace is the assumption readily made by the majority of people the world over that war is a duty of patriotic devotion. It would be a tenable argument that the last ground on which any war can ever be justified is the patriotic ground; for any belligerent, whether victorious or defeated, must necessarily be damaged by war, and from the patriotic point of view, the glorious dead were better alive.

Politicians have a terrible responsibility. It is they who declare war, for reasons which appear adequate to themselves. Once a war is declared no question remains about the moral nature of the decision: the menfolk proudly meet their death "for King and country," and any suggestion that their heroism is tragic because misdirected is regarded as treason. The whole question is begged. In an emergency the politician is taken for granted.

Let it therefore be remembered that in our time, even after the Great War ended, a certain group of politicians in Europe so flagrantly betrayed their trust that the people whom they betrayed took prompt (and in its turn unjustifiable) action. Six Cabinet Ministers were executed in Athens on the ground, established by courts-

martial and co-ordinated with the accepted ethics of capital punishment, that the Greek offensive of 1922 in Asia Minor had been deliberately ordered by those politicians in the teeth of their own military advisers. Thousands of Greek boys had been killed, and thousands of Greek families had been bereaved, for the purposes of party politics in Athens. When Lord Curzon, who was at Lausanne, heard the news of the executions he precipitately broke off diplomatic relations with Greece, but quickly realised—to his honour, be it recorded—that he had made a mistake and, there being no ground for breaking off relations, reversed his decision within a few hours.

It was interesting to observe at Lausanne how the politicians' instinct reacted to pride in an unusual situation. Many men have been shot since 1914, some of them in battle, some of them against a wall at dawn. The only class of people who as a general rule have been exempt from paying the price have been the politicians who made the war. The politicians at Lausanne were proud enough on second thoughts to realise that to wince because politicians, as opposed to other people, had been shot was to invite an obvious comment. When, further, there came a clearer recognition of the nature of the evidence before the revolutionary tribunal, it was conceded that if there was occasion for tears, they should be shed primarily for the half-starved, unpaid, ill-clothed, ill-equipped soldiers who had been sacrificed. It was not the case that the Athens executions were a form of Veniselist retaliation against the Royalists. The revolutionary tribunal consisted of nine Royalists to two Veniselists.

In the *Petit Parisien* of December 14th, 1922, there appeared the report of an interview which a represen-

tative of that newspaper obtained the day before with M. Mavromichalis in Athens. M. Mavromichalis was the Minister of the Interior of the revolutionary Cabinet, and a Cavalry General. Referring to the six men who had been shot as traitors, he made the following statement:

"Those men have not only brought about our military disaster, but they wanted it and premeditated it."

"With what object?" asked the interviewer.

"To maintain King Constantine on the throne. Do not forget that Gounaris and his accomplices hid from the people the fact that the only method of obviating the peril with which Greece was threatened consisted in yielding to the warnings of the Allied Powers—that is to say, in deciding on the abdication of the King. They took the opposite course. Concealing from the people what was said to them by the Allied representatives, they proceeded to persecute those who attempted to enlighten public opinion. They went to the length of assassination. The proprietor of the *Eleftheros Typos*, one of the biggest Greek newspapers, was killed. In a word, they left no stone unturned to retain the King on whom they were politically dependent. It was in order to shield themselves from the grave responsibility for their misdeeds that they planned the defeat of the Sangarios."

"How could they profit from a military defeat?"

"The Gounaris Cabinet had led us before the battle to the verge of losing Asia Minor: they contemplated its abandonment. It was therefore a matter of absolute necessity for them that this abandonment should appear to be the result of the army's defeat. Was not that high treason?"

"How was the end achieved?"

"By the systematic weakening of the Asia Minor front and the sending of strong contingents against Constantinople at the moment when the general staff anticipated an imminent attack against Afium Karahissar. It was precisely this sector which was weakened most by the movement of troops in question.

"This catastrophe has no precedent in history. It spelt ruin for many hundreds of thousands Greek citizens, the massacre of Christians by tens of thousands, dishonour for tens of thousands of Greeks. At present we have to minister to the needs of eight hundred thousand refugees; we have dozens of thousands of wounded and killed, forty thousand officers and soldiers are in captivity. We have lost Thrace and Asia Minor. That is the sum total of the Gounaris treason."

In answer to a further question M. Mavromichalis said: "The personnel of the officers who constituted the court-martial did not include one political enemy of the accused men."

A bad story; but it will do good if it helps to damage the sancrosanctity unthinkingly assigned to politicians, whenever wars and the rumours of war fill the horizon.

CHAPTER TEN: RUSSIA

§ 1. The Political Machine

RUSSIAN politicians and Russian politics hardly belong to the Continental category. Russian politicians move in a world apart. They are neither Eastern nor Western; in some ways they are both, in others neither.

What is Russia? In 1922, when M. Chicherin at Genoa signed the pact of non-aggression, he signed as the representative of "the Russian Soviet Government and the Governments at present allied with the Russian Soviet Government." At that moment there were fifteen republics carved out of the territory which had formerly been the Russian Empire, apart from Poland, Finland and the Baltic States, which were detached. Seven of those republics were autonomous, but owed their origin to decrees of the Russian Socialist Federal Republic and formed part of the federation under the Moscow Government. The remaining eight were independent and had been recognised as independent by Soviet Russia; but they were bound to Moscow in varying degrees by treaties, or by informal working arrangements. I remember at the end of the Genoa Conference asking Mr. Lloyd George (the author of the Genoa pact) if the eight independent republics were bound by M. Chicherin's signature, and he answered, with some hesitation, that they were. Yet it would have been difficult to prove that they were.

On July 6th, 1923, a form of written constitution was adopted at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The State was defined in these words: "The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.); the

Ukraine Socialist Soviet Republic (U.S.S.R.); the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (W.R.S.S.R.); and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (T.C.S.F.S.R.); the Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan; the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia; and the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia, join in one united State—the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics."

The Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is as long-winded as most other Russian phenomena. Its beginning is delicious. "Since the time (it runs) of the formation of the Soviet Republics, the States of the world have divided into two camps: the camp of Capitalism and the camp of Socialism. There—in the camp of Capitalism—national enmity and inequality, colonial slavery and chauvinism, national oppression and pogroms, imperialist brutalities and wars. Here—in the camp of Socialism—mutual confidence and peace and the brotherly collaboration of peoples." How the world revolution, that professed ideal of Moscow, can be reconciled with "peace and the brotherly collaboration of peoples"; how the Russian ultimatum to China in July 1929 over the Chinese Eastern Railway can be reconciled with "mutual confidence"—these questions could no doubt be answered by a Russian official to his own, but to nobody else's, satisfaction.

As in Italy, so in Russia, there is only one political party. In Italy it is the Fascist Party; in Russia the Communist Party. The elections (which in Russia take place annually) are an equal farce in both countries. Lenin once said: "There are only three Communists left in Russia: Lenin, Ulyanov and myself." And he is dead. The Communist Party lives in name, and in spite of the N.E.P. (new economic policy) it is still a theoretic purpose of the Constitution to uproot "capital-

ism " in Russia. The executive authority is vested in the Central Executive of the Union, which between its sessions delegates its authority to a Presidium of twenty-one members. The " Cabinet " consists of the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee and ten People's Commissars (Foreign Affairs, Army and Navy, Foreign Trade, Transport, Posts and Telegraphs, Labour, Finance, Workers' and Peasants' Control, Trade, and Supreme Council of Public Economy).

In the following sections some description is given of a typical Commissar (M. Litvinov, Foreign Affairs) and a typical Russian diplomatist (M. Rakovsky).

§ 2. M. Litvinov

In the middle of the confusion produced by the Anglo-Russian Conference in 1924 M. Litvinov arrived in London and was given a hostile reception by the *Morning Post*, which, however, did not distress him. Seven weeks earlier, when the Conference opened, M. Litvinov's name was included in the list of the Russian Delegation, it being explained at the time that his journey from Moscow had been delayed, and that he would probably be too late for the opening ceremony. The fact that the delay extended to seven weeks called for no elaborate explanation, and did not surprise those who, at Genoa, Lausanne or elsewhere, had had the opportunity of observing the temperament of Russian Delegations. Those who explained M. Litvinov's arrival as a signal of Moscow's distrust of M. Rakovsky had not only forgotten the context, but hardly understood Russian methods. It would have been as profitable to assign a sinister explanation to the keenness with which the Russian delegates paid their periodic visits to the Amuse-

ment Park at Wembley as to explain why one of the chief delegates at the Conference missed the starting-post by seven weeks. It would have been equally futile to resent the literary activities of another member of the Delegation who, after going to an evening party in London, wrote a long description for a Russian paper of the way in which women were powdered, painted and " made-up " in capitalist London. The arrival of M. Litvinov made precisely no difference to anything, except that his knowledge of the English language was welcomed by M. Rakovsky, who himself had to make himself understood in French. M. Rakovsky was, however, learning English hard. At his house in Hampstead he read English fairy stories, his progress being dotted with marginal translations in French as a help to his memory. Whether M. Litvinov's extensive experience of London life—including a sojourn in Brixton Gaol—was of any practical help to the rest of the Delegation was of less importance.

M. Litvinov comes second only to M. Bukharin for his lack of seriousness and of purpose. Probably his happiest moment in life was when he received a Note from Sir Austen Chamberlain dated February 23rd, 1927. That Note ended with a rebuke : " His Majesty's Government trust that this protest and warning will be received by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the attention they require, and that no further cause of complaint may be given."

A jaded schoolmaster, if he thus admonished his offending pupils, would have precisely no effect on them, good or bad. He would do no harm. The British Government, however, by admonishing another government—above all, the Russian Government—in so pathetic a strain, did something which was not only

M. LITVINOV

psychologically bad, as M. Litvinov immediately proved, but which overwhelmingly defeated its object. M. Litvinov's answer was an obvious pleasure to him. It was composed without delay, and was dated February 26th—only three days after the Foreign Office messenger delivered Sir Austen's Note at Chesham House. It contained not one serious sentence from beginning to end.

The keynote was struck in the very first sentence, in which M. Litvinov made the flippant suggestion that the British Foreign Secretary had been guilty of diplomatic bad form. "The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* in Great Britain," ran the sentence, "has transmitted to me telegraphically the Note signed by Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary, which was handed to him on the 23rd instant, and was published on the same day in the British Press." It was clearly of no concern to M. Litvinov that his facts were wrong. Anyone who knows the style of Russian controversy knows that facts in such controversy are regarded as valid only in so far as they contribute to the argument, and that otherwise they are modified, or suppressed, or turned completely round. In this case what had happened was that the Foreign Office messenger went to Chesham House early in the afternoon of February 23rd —which fact gave ample time for M. Rosengolz, if he had chosen, to transmit the Note to Moscow that same day—and, on the other hand, the Foreign Office deliberately refrained from issuing the text to the British Press till it was too late for the evening papers of that same day to make use of it. It is the fact that the text was not published till the following morning. Yet M. Litvinov could begin his official answer with a cheap score based on the allegation that it was published on

the same day: an allegation which M. Litvinov must have known was false.

It would be tedious to analyse M. Litvinov's letter. As was generally expected in those quarters that did enough thinking to form any expectation, he contented himself with *tu quoques*, and played off Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Winston Churchill against M. Bukharin and M. Karakhan. For the rest, of course, he carefully neglected to promise that Russia would be good in the future.

A word should be recorded about M. Litvinov's fertility in the written and in the spoken word and his difficulty of ever condensing his matter. There had been little diplomatic scope for him, except at Geneva, until the Kellogg Pact became entangled with the Anglo-French Submarine-and-Cruiser "Pact." When the general depression resulting from that entanglement was at its depth, M. Litvinov handed a letter to M. Herbette, the French Ambassador in Moscow. It was the Soviet Government's answer to the American invitation to sign the Pact for the Renunciation of War. The invitation itself had been handed to Russia as it were at the end of a pitch-fork, for the United States was not on diplomatic speaking terms with the U.S.S.R., any more than was Great Britain. Such a circumstance was perhaps a little unfortunate in so idealist an enterprise as the banishment of war and the closer binding together of the peoples. The French Government, however, which in this matter had more common sense than either the British or the American Governments, and was on speaking terms with Russia, acted as mediary. It was to M. Herbette therefore that M. Litvinov handed his answer.

It was a very long document. It gave an attractive

picture of the whole past history, present virtues and future aspirations of the Soviet Government, exposed the insincerity of all the other Governments concerned, particularly of the British Government, complained that the proposals put forward on divers occasions from Moscow for the salvation of the world from armaments had been rejected by almost all the States now signing the pact to renounce war, dismissed the League of Nations as a weakling and futile agency, and ended lamely by expressing Russia's decision to sign the Pact.

There was little doubt about Russia's own sincerity in signing the Pact, even though the background of the vast Red Army was an odd background to M. Litvinov's letter. Russia was the first Government in the world (so it was claimed by Moscow organs) to ratify its signature of the Pact. That signature was, indeed, ratified in advance. The fifteen original signatures signed the Pact in Paris on August 27th, 1928. On August 29th the Presidium of the Soviet Executive Committee, in Moscow, authorised the Soviet's signature of the Pact, thereby giving legislative sanction to the signature, when it should take place. M. Litvinov gave the letter which constituted the acceptance to M. Herbette on August 31st, the text was published on September 1st, and the letter was received by the State Department in Washington, via the French Embassy, on October 4th.

Russian diplomacy, especially when expounded by M. Litvinov, can be relied on to provide the comic relief when more serious diplomacy gets itself into a muddle.

When M. Litvinov went to Geneva as Russia's representative on the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference he snatched his chance of talking to his heart's content. He first, however, had to remake contact with the representatives of that British Govern-

ment which had cut him and his countrymen short in 1927, and he thereby showed that other politicians beside the Russian can behave as children. On December 5th, 1927, Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Litvinov spoke to each other. The meeting had been preceded by tactics such as private schoolboys would have regarded as too silly. Austen was not on speaking terms with Litvinov. Their two countries had fallen out. Litvinov made it known in a roundabout way that he would like to have a talk with Austen to see if they could make it up. The roundabout hint was conveyed to Austen. No, Litvinov must make a direct, open, formal request to be received by Austen. Thereupon Litvinov propagated the view that, as Great Britain, in the first place, had kicked out the Russians, it was for Austen to take the first step. As it became clear that Austen's pride was adamant, Litvinov pocketed his own pride, and, being anxious for the meeting, made the direct request. The two met. They talked frankly (as they later announced in a sulky official communication) about their relationship, but failed to discover any basis of agreement. In effect they agreed to continue the quarrel. They had the further, if unconscious, effect of reducing the situation to absurdity; for they then proceeded (not being on speaking terms) to sit as members of the same committee pursuing the lofty ideal of universal peace and fraternity.

M. Litvinov's history at Geneva is a study in the slow damping of exuberant eloquence. He started excellently by submitting that if the world wanted to disarm, it should simply disarm, immediately and wholly; but he interwove his argument about disarmament with some commonplace Russian nonsense about capitalism, which gave his critics their red herring. He always gets

up first at Geneva and launches a plan. He has no patience. He cannot bear to listen to anybody else; and he cannot bear to wait for results. In 1927 he argued that the League of Nations had made no progress towards achieving general disarmament, and proposed that the intervening stages be jumped: that all nations should immediately abolish their armies, their navies and their air forces, demolish all factories which manufactured arms or which could be turned to the manufacture of arms, sink all existing battleships, scrap all war material and munitions, pay off the general staffs, and behold! the world would be disarmed. Yet he could not bear to take part in the work of the Security Commission, which was trying to create the condition for disarmament. At another meeting of the Disarmament Commission (March 1928) he even argued that there was no inconsistency between his proposal and the extensive training of the Red Army, because the Red Army was a protective measure necessitated by Russia's surrounding enemies, who most of them were guilty of what he described as "hostile manifestations." He did not see that he was begging his own question.

M. Litvinov took the occasion of the April 1929 meeting of the League's Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference to illustrate again his large and possessive outlook over the fields of diplomacy. The first few days of the Commission's activity were taken up, as is usual whenever the Commission meets, with M. Litvinov himself. He got off the mark again with his full proposal for disarmament, but this time he had watered it down to a scheme for a proportionate decrease of armaments in each category of armaments. History again repeated itself in the lack of enthusiasm with which

his proposal was received by his colleagues. He was thereby provoked into a broadside request that the Commission should vote for or against the principles of his proposal: whereupon the President, M. Loudon, of Holland, tactfully adjourned the meeting to give the members time to consider what M. Litvinov so insistently demanded. When the Commission reassembled M. Litvinov's request was ignored, and M. Litvinov circularised the members of the Commission with copies of a long statement he had drafted for their information. The point of the statement was that the past work of the Commission had been futile, and that all future work of the Commission would be futile, unless and until his (M. Litvinov's) proposals were adopted.

Is there not something attractive in M. Litvinov's unflagging energy, in his sublime indifference to the weary reaction he produces in his colleagues, and in his refusal ever to be discouraged?

§ 3. M. Rakovsky

At the beginning of August 1923 M. Rakovsky had been accepted by the British Government as the Russian representative in London. On the eve of his departure from Moscow to London certain information reached the Foreign Office which immediately induced the Government to telegraph to Mr. William Peters, the British representative in Moscow, instructing him to demand an explanation from the Soviet Foreign Office, and pending the receipt of such an explanation to withdraw the consent of the British Government to M. Rakovsky's coming to London. What had happened, according to the information received in London, was that M. Rakov-

sky had been indulging in some rather extravagant sentiments of unfriendliness towards Great Britain.

The unfortunate thing was that M. Rakovsky was reported to have made unfriendly statements in public not only before but after his appointment as Russian representative. On a first impulse one could understand the line taken by the British Government in deciding that it could not welcome to London a self-avowed enemy of the British Empire. The first of M. Rakovsky's speeches, which was made on May 14th, was printed as a pamphlet under the title "England and Russia" by the Ukrainian Soviet State Publishing Department, and a copy of the pamphlet reached London. There could be no argument, therefore, about the nature of the statements made by him on that occasion. As, however, they were made during the course of an Anglo-Russian controversy, and for the express purpose of putting the Russian point of view, their exuberance was understandable, and, moreover, the point made about British subjugation of alien nationalities was common form in Bolshevik propaganda.

The second speech, delivered by M. Rakovsky at Kharkov, in July, was the real point at issue between the Soviet and British Foreign Offices. On the face of it, it looked as if, after being appointed Russian Trade Representative in London, and after receiving British consent to his working in London as such, he had made a violent speech on the eve of his departure prophesying the collapse of the British Empire, and exulting in the part that he himself might be enabled to play in London to help on that collapse and to make use of it at the critical moment for the purposes of the world revolution! If that was true, it was not in human nature to expect Lord Curzon of all people not to be moved to indignation.

M. Rakovsky never appeared to take as serious a view of his responsibility as did M. Krassin, although he worked hard, talked hard and schemed hard. I remember a conversation I had with him during the Anglo-Russian conference. He was very excited. "At a moment," he exclaimed, "when the English capitalists who hold German bonds have lost every penny, when the English creditors of France have seen their holdings reduced by three-quarters by the fall of the franc, it would be an enormity for you to ask Russia to pay rouble for rouble. According to what one hears in the City, the bondholders of the Russian loan insist that we shall incur the full obligation for the whole debt. If this is true, I frankly fear that in the future, as in the past, we shall not be able to pay anything. If, faced with the alternatives of receiving something from Russia and receiving nothing, the bondholders still insist blindly on Russia's recognition of her total debt, it will be proved that it is not money that they want, but a political end."

"But," I objected, "what is your formula? You have your debt, and according to British ideas of financial honour, as exemplified in the case of the British debt to the United States, debts are paid without argument."

"You make it," he said, "a question of principle. The bondholders, according to the city rumours, also make it a question of principle, and say that they cannot allow any precedent except that of full payment. This is strange, for are there not numerous precedents already existing, not as a result of Russian action? As a matter of principle our peasants are not obliged to pay the Tsarist debts. We shall get no further by opposing principle to principle. We must transfer the matter to the ground of practical advantage. And why, in any

case, do you talk of principle only in the case of Russia? The bondholders of the Turkish debt had their holdings reduced three times during the last century, and in the Treaty of Lausanne the Allies agreed to a further reduction."

[M. Rakovsky was here referring to the clause which allowed Turkey to pay in Turkish paper instead of in the currency of the holder, which was the option of the holder according to the original contract.]

"Even private debts," continued M. Rakovsky, "have in Germany been reduced to 15 per cent. of their nominal value. Have not enormous reductions also been made of private debts in every Balkan and Baltic country? Why in the one case of Russia should you wish to make an exception? Public opinion in Russia will interpret this intransigence as an attempt at punishment for her Government being Socialist. We cannot in any circumstances admit such treatment."

"The pre-war rouble," I observed, "is worthless, and obviously you cannot claim to pay in roubles. If a recalculation of your liability were made, taking into consideration all that you have said, taking all the debts, pre-war and war debts together, and subtracting an agreed estimate of British damage in the White campaigns, would you pay the resultant obligations?"

"On that calculation," he answered, "we have already paid our debt in full, for the national revenue of Russia fell from 15,000,000,000 roubles in 1913 to 4,000,000,000 in 1921."

"Not because of your nationalisation policy?" I asked.

"No; because all the big industrial and agricultural districts of Russia have been for almost three years occupied by foreign or by White armies—the Caucasus,

the Ukraine, Siberia—and because Russia has been reduced territorially to several provinces in the centre. But for intervention we should have applied our new economic policy (N.E.P., as we call it, Novaya Economitchescaya Politica) in 1918 instead of in 1921."

I still insisted that M. Rakovsky had not given me a formula for Russia's payment of debts, which was the only means whereby a Russian loan could be raised.

"Our formula," he said, "is the payment of debts considerably reduced in exchange for a loan. The British Delegation presents us with a formula which is not only exclusively one of principle, but unilateral. For the raising of a loan the British answer at the Conference sent us to the City, the City in its turn takes its stand on the Bankers' Manifesto, and says: 'Earn our confidence first; you can earn our confidence by repudiating your Socialism.' In these circumstances no practical result is possible."

The above extract from our conversation is reproduced to show how far from practical is M. Rakovsky's mind.

The effect of the famous Zinoviev letter on M. Rakovsky and all Russian politicians was typical of their nature. They were delighted that the Russian blot on the British horizon continued to flourish. When, on the eve of the 1924 election (Tuesday, October 28th), M. Herriot, then Prime Minister of France, sent a telegram to M. Chicherin in Moscow announcing the French decision to recognise the Russian Government *de jure*, a Russian official in London made the flippant comment: "Another bombshell! There are too many of them, but the Herriot bombshell is more sensible than the Zinoviev bombshell." Mr. Gregory's Note to M. Rakovsky was dated October 24th, M. Rakovsky's answer October 25th—the dates illuminating the alacrity with which M.

Rakovsky was playing up. Moreover, he had received the British Note only at 8 p.m. the night before. By luncheon time he had written his answer. Luncheon time on that occasion was three o'clock, M. Rakovsky's luncheon being a sliding function capable of taking place at any moment between limits three hours apart. I went to see him at his house at Swiss Cottage (he had now taken another house) just after he had written his note. I have never known him in a better or more exuberant humour. He was as delighted as a child with a new toy. His Note merely consisted of a detailed rejoinder that the Zinoviev document was a forgery, and that the British Foreign Office had departed from the usual courtesy of bringing such a matter to his private notice before embarking on a serious official protest; and rounded off by a demand for an apology!

Why should anyone take Russian politics seriously? Serious treatment of them is water on a duck's back. For fun I asked M. Rakovsky: "Has the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics any connection with the Communist International?" He answered promptly and gaily: "None." He did not see the trap, and would not have cared if he had. I went on: "In that case, I take it, you can have no direct knowledge of the Zinoviev document. How then, may I ask, do you know it is a forgery?"

M. Rakovsky did not resent being cross-examined. He loved it; and, moreover, I honestly believe he has never resented anything in his life and has never felt anything except extreme *joie de vivre*. He answered my questions thus: "Simply because I have read it." He thereupon went into details of internal evidence. "I am a Communist myself," he said, "and I know this is not a Communist document."

He further, and with the like irresponsible good humour, gave me to understand that the Russian Communists have better methods than that of the Zinoviev letter for fomenting world revolution. I suggested, therefore, that it would be interesting for the British people to know whether he, M. Rakovsky, as Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London, would like to see a revolution in this country; but he met me with an evasive laugh, and merely said that his business in London was to promote friendly relations between the two countries, and that he was not concerned with questions of his Government's general policy abroad!

M. Rakovsky's departure from London towards the end of 1925 was a melancholy event. He had been Russia's political representative in London for two years. Ever since the Baldwin Government came into power in 1924 he had been cold-shouldered and left in isolation at Chesham House. After Locarno one was justified in expecting that the British Government would display, if not more genuine friendliness, at least a little more elementary common sense in its attitude to M. Rakovsky. Yet it came to pass that M. Rakovsky was transferred to Paris, and replaced in London by M. Krassin. On November 7th he and Madame Rakovsky held a reception at Chesham House to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the Soviet Republic. In the circumstances it was their farewell reception. The chief representatives of the Diplomatic Corps in London went to it as a matter of course, and among them the French and German Ambassadors. Not a single representative of the British Government was there—an omission which was not excused, but made more puerile, by the official argument that November 7th was not a proper occasion for the Government to be represented. Every commentator

in the British Press who had given the Government full and even generous credit for Locarno, made indignant protests against the inconsistency and the stupidity of thus continuing to boycott Russia. As if to show, however, the length to which perversity could still go, M. Rakovsky, on the following Saturday (November 14th), was allowed to leave London without a single British representative being included among the Diplomatic Corps at the station.

M. Rakovsky got into trouble when he went to Paris. On August 9th, 1927, it became known that he had signed a declaration issued by the minority of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow. The manifesto contained the commonplace Moscow propaganda, and had nothing substantially new in it. It elaborated the familiar formulæ, which Moscow normally uses in inviting the world at large to confound itself after the Russian manner. In particular it contained this sentence: "Every honest proletarian in the Capitalists' countries must look actively for the defeat of his government, and all soldiers of foreign countries who do not desire to help their slave masters must desert to the Red Army." French opinion, which has a reputation for logic, interpreted that sentence as an attempt to seduce the soldiers of France from their allegiance. French opinion is not the only opinion in the West that has taken a heavy view of the propaganda that regularly drivels from the unbalanced people of Moscow. It is to be noticed that the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party made no pretence of pacifism as its motive. Its invitation was not that foreign soldiers should refuse to fight, but that they should fight under the Red Flag. Could nonsense go further? What conceivable appeal could there be

to the French *poilu* to bolt from the French army, migrate to Russia, and enlist in the Red Army? The thing was simply not true to life. Also, on the point of logic, assuming the Moscow invitation to have been accepted up to 100 per cent., there would be no army in the world except the Red Army, which would presumably spend its time marching up the hill and down again.

There was, perhaps, some interest in the personal position of M. Rakovsky. His years of service as Russian envoy in London and in Paris won for him the reputation of a certain simplicity and of a highly developed sense of fun. It is difficult to imagine that M. Rakovsky could take anything seriously enough to make him ill-disposed to anyone or anything. M. Rakovsky as a world revolutionary is an almost comic improbability. In signing the manifesto of August 9th, he no doubt did so as a matter of Bolshevist routine. He probably took so little interest in what he signed that it never occurred to him that there could be any difficulty or impropriety in his signing a document which, on the face of it, was seditiously directed against the country to which he was accredited. Yet the combined duties of agitator and envoy hardly mix even when the rôle of agitator has degenerated into an almost meaningless habit. The storm duly broke in Paris.

M. Rakovsky had to be recalled from Paris to Moscow, although the step thus taken was not without its embarrassment to M. Chicherin, and illustrated one of the peculiar difficulties of Moscow politics. The successor designated by M. Chicherin was M. Dovgalevsky, who had played a prominent but a troubled part in the history of the Russian Communist Party. In 1923 he was a Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs in the Government,

but was removed from his post because he was suspected of sympathising with the Opposition. To combine Ministerial responsibility with Opposition sympathy is an original but a difficult adventure. M. Dovgalevsky had been kept out of Russia ever since. He was first sent as Soviet representative to Stockholm, and later to Tokio. It now looked as if M. Chicherin wanted to keep M. Rakovsky in Paris because M. Rakovsky clearly belonged to the Opposition, and in the alternative, wanted to send M. Dovgalevsky to Paris for the like reason. The ridiculous muddle produced by the Rakovsky incident merely epitomised the general muddle produced by Russia's attempt to combine disturbance abroad with harmony at home, to sow mischief, yet to reap goodwill and loans.

§ 4. A Footnote on M. Krassin

A footnote deserves to be written about the curious case of M. Krassin. He is dead, and therefore properly does not belong to the province of this book; but his memory serves to shed a contrasting light on the nature of nearly every other Russian politician who survives him.

M. Rakovsky's predecessor in London, Leonid Borisovich Krassin, the bourgeois Bolshevik, was more practical than the other Russian emissaries. He was an engineer by original profession, and had become a Bolshevik because otherwise he could not have been anything at all in Russia. He took a genially and healthily cynical view of all politics, his serious concern being to restart trade between Russia and Great Britain, which the politicians on both sides had done their worst to suppress. He achieved the remarkable feat of pledging

his Government—the Bolshevik Government of the U.S.S.R., whose first principle was the repudiation of national debt—to repay the debts to Great Britain. The City of London saw his value, but the Conservative politicians in London continued not to see it. M. Krassin was patient and long-sighted. He was unlike any of his colleagues. He did not even look much like a Russian. His thin, pointed face and beard, his shrill voice—he spoke French as French was never spoken before—combined to invest him with an air as foreign to Moscow as his views were essentially foreign to those of the Moscow Government. He cut a tragic figure as Russian representative in London. As if to crown the tragedy, he was again appointed to London in the like capacity in September 1926, nine months after M. Rakovsky was transferred to Paris, but by the nature of things never had a fair chance, because his main instruction from Moscow was to promise payment of Russia's existing debt out of the proceeds of a new loan, such a loan being made the precedent condition of any settlement.

§ 5. M. Bukharin

M. Bukharin is the perfect Bolshevist. He would be almost totally unknown if he had not been advertised by the British Government. On February 23rd, 1927, Sir Austen Chamberlain sent a Note to Russia. The moment it was received in Moscow the harebrained people, who had been languishing, found for the first time in many months that they had something to talk about. One of them appealed to the workers of the world to sharpen their swords in readiness for the world proletariat war against British capitalism, as well as for other long-winded contingencies.

To the historian of the future it will be a little hard to believe that Sir Austen Chamberlain, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, devoted some part of a State Paper to lengthy quotations from the works of the egregrious M. Bukharin. Of all the comic speeches that have been made by Russian Bolshevik leaders since 1917, those of M. Bukharin have been the most conspicuous. Yet some of M. Bukharin's choicest gems were grimly recorded in London as evidence against him, and in Sir Austen's Note of February 23rd the following passage, for instance, was reproduced. It was taken from a speech made by M. Bukharin at a conference of the Russian Communist Party and before the "Executive Committee of the Communist International." Said M. Bukharin: "Mighty masses are marching under the Soviet star under the banner of Communism. Comrades! Our proletariat is ready to do everything to strengthen the forces of world revolution and to facilitate the process thereof. Has not our party proved that it will do everything necessary to defend the cause of world revolution? During the great English Strike, during the great China revolution, our party—we can and dare assert this—has shown itself in the forefront." Charles Dickens would have thanked the Soviet star if such speeches had been made in real life before he started to write his "Pickwick Papers." If M. Bukharin had thus delivered himself at Marble Arch, in Hyde Park, any Sunday afternoon, he would have been drowned in derisive glee within five minutes. Yet M. Bukharin's wretched drivel "drew" Lord Birkenhead, made Winston wince, and was gloomily enshrined in a Foreign Office paper. Such historic "gaffe" as the British Note of February 23rd wholly deserved the sympathetic reception it received in Moscow.

M. Bukharin would probably never have been heard of outside of Moscow if the British Conservative Government had refrained from republishing his trash.

§ 6. The O.G.P.U.

It would, however, be misleading to explain all Russian political activity by the thesis that Russian politicians are children. There is a strain of savagery in Russian politics, of which a bad example was enacted after the notorious Arcos raid in London in the summer of 1927. On June 7th, 1927, M. Rosengolz, who had been Russian representative in London until he was expelled after the Arcos raid, was standing in the Warsaw railway station talking to M. Voikov, the Soviet Minister to Poland, who had gone to meet the Berlin-Warsaw express on which M. Rosengolz was travelling en route for Moscow. A young Russian Monarchist, Boris Kowerda, shot M. Voikov dead, and then explained that he had done it from patriotic motives. M. Voikov had played a leading rôle in the assassination of the Emperor Nicholas and his family in July 1918. The Royal Family had been taken to Ekaterinburg in the Urals, and M. Voikov, being a Commissioner of the town, took part in the organisation of the murder, and being Commissar of Supplies, had to find the petrol wherewith the bodies were burnt. The assassin was now assassinated. Moscow at once burst into accusations against the British Government, and by mental gymnastics traced the origin of M. Voikov's murder to London.

Those gymnastics were an example of what all good Europeans had feared. A reign of terror was started in Moscow. Twenty Royalists were executed in cold blood on palpably trumped-up charges of espionage

and of having been in relationship with British officials in Moscow. Other executions followed. As the British officials in question, Sir Robert Hodgson and his colleagues, had, in the meantime, arrived in London, Moscow's fantastic accusations could be readily answered.

For six years the British representatives in Moscow had kept themselves severely to themselves precisely because they knew that to have any acquaintances in Moscow would be unfair on those acquaintances and because they themselves were compelled in self-defence to take precautions against the State Political Department, known for short as the O.G.P.U., formerly the Cheka. It was a firm rule made by the British diplomatists in Moscow to have no Russian relations whatever except with the Russian officials with whom it was their business to deal. The secret service of the O.G.P.U. was so widespread and so panicky that the British official quarter became a water-tight compartment.

In spite, however, of such extreme precautions, the O.G.P.U. did discover something to report. It was inevitable that, when so many Government spies were paid to discover evidence of "counter-revolutionary activity," they would succeed in discovering something, if only to justify their own employment. The British diplomatists in Moscow would even refrain from asking a railway porter about the times of trains, for fear the O.G.P.U. should send a note to headquarters reporting British spying into the Russian transport system for information to be used in case of war. The Russian secret service agents permeated the whole life of Moscow and produced an atmosphere of nervous apprehension which was best endured in silence.

On his return to London Sir Robert Hodgson decided to answer Moscow's outrageous allegations, and therefore

issued a detailed statement (*Observer*, June 12th, 1927) which ran thus: "Allegations emanating from Moscow of illicit practices by members of the British Mission in Moscow, which have recently been repeated in the British Press, cannot be allowed to pass without challenge. They are contained, so far, in three pronouncements, namely, a speech by M. Rykov, an official communiqué from the Soviet Government, and a report printed in the evening papers of June 10th, announcing the execution in Moscow of twenty persons, of whom four are stated to have been spies in British employ. M. Rykov quotes in full a letter addressed by Mr. Preston, in Leningrad, so long ago as 1924, to Mr. Jerram, a member of the staff of the British Mission in Moscow. The letter alludes to a request received from the Department of Overseas Trade by Mr. Peters, asking for information regarding the possibilities of selling 'fine chemicals' in Russia. Mr. Preston, not understanding the expression 'fine chemicals,' asks Mr. Jerram to explain it to him. He adds that he is afraid of employing 'Russian birds' for collecting the information demanded by the Department of Overseas Trade, as he fears that they may expose themselves to being 'hanged, drawn, and quartered by the State Political Department for spying.' In other words, Mr. Preston anticipates that, should he ask Russians to help him in obtaining information on what is obviously a perfectly innocent matter, they are liable to be treated as spies and summarily executed.

"The question arises, Were Mr. Preston's apprehensions justified? M. Rykov proceeds to show by the examples which he quotes of G.P.U. justice that they were. He mentions the case of 'Peshkov,' a former officer of the Kolchak army, and one Filin, shot

for supplying information on military matters to Mr. Charnock, of the British Mission. Peshkov—who, incidentally, was never an officer in the Kolchak army, but had civilian employment in Omsk in Kolchak's time—had been an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy. On the arrival of the British Mission in Moscow in 1921 he was put into contact with Sir Robert Hodgson, an old acquaintance of his, by a woman of the name of Dahl, who was a secret agent of the G.P.U. and had been in Siberia in the Kolchak time. Temporary employment was given to him by the representative of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in Moscow. Shortly afterwards he was arrested, together with his wife and a large number of other persons, on a charge of having organised, under Sir R. Hodgson's instructions, a counter-revolutionary movement in Siberia. Sir R. Hodgson sought the assistance of M. Karakhan, who most courteously promised to look into the matter. The whole charge was shown to be a mare's nest. Peshkov and the other persons involved were set at liberty, and nothing further was heard of the matter. Peshkov returned to his employment with the C.P.R., and, being a capable and hard-working man, was most useful in organising the firm's office. He remained in their employ till May 1925, when he again was arrested. The nature of the charge against him never transpired till now, though it was generally suspected to be what Rykov declares it to have been—espionage for the benefit of Great Britain. The accomplices whom Rykov mentions were friends of Peshkov, for whom he had found employment in the C.P.R. office. It stands to reason that, after the Dahl affair: (1) Peshkov was the last person in Russia who was likely to work as a spy for Great Britain, and (2) the last person to whom Sir

Robert Hodgson was likely to apply for information. In fact, though the acquaintance between the British Mission and Peshkov was maintained, it was deliberately confined to a minimum, in order to diminish the risks of criminal significance being attributed to it. The accusation quoted by M. Rykov, that Peshkov and his friend were engaged in espionage work, is utterly and entirely without foundation.

"Even more fantastic is the case of Filin. He was a young officer in the Red Army, whose wife was a friend from childhood of Mrs. Charnock. He had a post immediately under the Revolutionary Military Council, and in that capacity was doubtless in a position to procure information on matters of military importance. It was precisely for this reason that Mr. Charnock kept away from him and avoided any dealings with him which might conceivably compromise him. He met him in all some four or five times during the five and a half years the Mission was in Moscow, and then only in company. On no occasion did he discuss military matters with him. It is only now that the nature of the charge on which he was shot is revealed.

"With the accusations launched by the Moscow communiqué, it is unnecessary to deal at length. Allegations that Mr. Vice-Consul Waite was involved in plots to blow up the Kremlin and the Grand Theatre, etc., are so grotesquely absurd that no good purpose would be served by attempting to disprove them. They are on a par with other charges made against the British from time to time by the Soviet Press of having organised the Pilsudski *coup d'état* in Poland and the overthrow of the Lithuanian Government, of attempting the destruction of the Leningrad Water Works, of planning to seize the islands of Dago and Oesel in the Baltic,

conspiring to murder Reza Shah, and so on *ad infinitum*.

"Allusions have been, and doubtless will again be, made to so-called 'confessions' made by persons arrested by the State Political Department. These 'confessions' must be treated with the gravest mistrust, for the G.P.U. officials habitually endeavour to wring admissions from their victims by threats or by promising to release them on condition that they sign statements dictated to them. Similarly, they employ the most abominable measures of compulsion to induce people to act as their agents. Among other cases of the kind may be mentioned that of Louise Koch, a maid-servant of the British Mission, who, on the premises of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, was threatened with life imprisonment unless she acted as informer on Sir R. Hodgson, and with death if she revealed to him the fact that she had been approached. It is unnecessary to demonstrate that the information supplied by agents recruited in this manner is entirely valueless."

CHAPTER ELEVEN: LITHUANIA AND POLAND

§ 1. The Baltic Quarrel

THE post-war history of the Baltic countries has been dominated by the Lithuanian–Polish dispute about Vilna. Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, was annexed in October 1920 by a Pole, General Zeligowski, who thereby violated both the Lithuanian–Polish Suvalki Treaty, signed only two days before, and the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Polish Government at first disowned General Zeligowski as being a rebel, one for whose acts Warsaw could not be held responsible; and then, by an unruffled transition, proceeded to keep the ill-gotten gain for itself. Poland defied Geneva. Geneva, under French influence, betrayed its principles, and in 1923 gave its blessing and its *fiat* to the Polish annexation by approving the edict of the Ambassadors' Conference (dominated by France) that Poland should retain Vilna. But the controversy has waxed strong ever since, and by a just nemesis Geneva has never been, and probably never will be, rid of it.

In Poland political standards are crude. In spite of the initial propaganda by which official Warsaw at first disclaimed responsibility for the capture of Vilna, President Pilsudski within three years disclosed the fact that Warsaw was responsible up to the hilt. Speaking in Vilna on August 24th, 1923, President Pilsudski said, according to the Vilna paper *Slowo*: "It is so. I tore down the Suvalki Treaty, and afterwards I proclaimed a false *communiqué* of the General Staff. Thus I prepared for General Zeligowski's campaign. It was done by myself. It was my order that led to the result." A

kindred secret was revealed two years later in a book on Poland, "La Risurrezione della Polonia" (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1925), written by Francesco Tommasini, Italian Minister at Warsaw. The author states:

"On December 6th, 1922, Pilsudski, when taking leave of the Diplomatic Corps, invited my colleagues, the Ministers for South America, France, England and myself, to Belvedere, being desirous of seeing us again. We were invited to go from the lower floor, where the official ceremony was held, to his private apartments on the upper floor, where he himself speedily arrived. In the meantime he had changed his marshal's uniform for the dress of a Polish legionary, and said: 'I wished to receive you in the dress in which you found me when you visited me for the first time, and I desire to talk to you in a friendly manner.' At first the conversation turned on Lloyd George's anti-Polish attitude in the summer of 1920, and in this connexion Pilsudski, in his picturesque words, a little vague but charming, tendered a patriotic apology for his 'children' (*i.e.* his legionaries). Subsequently, on rising, he stated that he had to report a certain confidential matter, begging us to promise to keep the secret, and, strongly emphasising the strictly personal character of his report, asked us to pass into his bedroom. When we were seated round the table, he stood in the middle of the room and said:

"'Gentlemen, one day I had to tell you that General Zeligowski was disobedient to my orders and occupied Vilna. Now, when I have become a simple citizen, I feel it my duty to correct that statement and to relieve Zeligowski from all responsibility. *He acted according to my orders*, and also, having a loyal soldier's conscience, he could never have ventured on a formal act of rebellion. I had (he added ironically) a great deal of trouble before

I could persuade him to dispense with my giving him instructions in writing to rebel.'

"While we showed great interest in this revelation, we did not conceal from him that it had not astonished us. I do not think that I shall be guilty of indiscretion in reporting that episode, because Pilsudski himself has already reported it in a public speech."

Lithuania's resentment against Poland for the annexation, and Polish obstinacy in sticking to the spoils, have vitiated all relations between the two countries for ten years. Only once has the hardness of the relationship been softened. On December 10th, 1927, M. Voldemaras, the Dictator of Lithuania, and Marshal Pilsudski, the Dictator of Poland, met face to face in Geneva. The occasion was a secret meeting of the Council at which an attempt was made to draw up a resolution which might dispose of the technical "state of war" that had obtained between the two countries since 1920. The *rapporteur*, Jonkheer Beerlaerts van Blokland, was reading a proposed draft, when Marshal Pilsudki, whose chief concern was to obtain a Lithuanian declaration of formal peace with Poland, and who felt that the formula submitted was not downright enough, decided to drive the issue home. He exclaimed something to this effect: "I want to know whether we are going to have peace or war. If it is peace I shall telegraph to Warsaw for a *Te Deum* to be sung in all the churches and for the ringing of all the bells." M. Voldemaras promptly answered that he wanted peace.

The gesture, however, did not lead to peace. An agreement of a minor sort was signed, it is true, by Lithuania and Poland on November 7th, 1928. The thin streak of light thereby thrown into Polish–Lithuanian relations served mainly to accentuate the darkness. If

truth were not stranger than fiction, one would regard the condition of life in those two neighbouring countries as intolerable; yet this dispute drags on without end. There had been conferences and committees in Kovno, in Warsaw, in Berlin, in Königsberg, all in vain. They all broke on the old rock, whereon Poland clings to Vilna, and Lithuania, so as not to prejudice her claim to Vilna, rejects any arrangement with Poland, so long as Poland retains Vilna.

An absolute barrier is fixed between the two countries along the present administrative boundary. Traffic of every kind stops dead at that line. The general European movement for the conclusion of treaties of non-aggression, security pacts and the like has been ineffective against the absolute prohibition of the Lithuanian–Polish dividing line. The French, British and even the German Governments have tried to soften what they regard as M. Voldemaras's uncompromising stand against any accommodation with a Poland which refuses to disgorge Vilna. Oddly enough, it does not occur to them to try to soften Poland.

M. Voldemaras is infused with the spirit of a holy crusade, against which appeals for moderation fall flat. At Geneva and elsewhere he has listened with apparent sympathy to those who have urged him, on grounds of political and economic expediency, to accept the accomplished fact of Poland's possession of Vilna. The moment, however, he has found himself face to face, for instance, with M. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, all his fire has broken out afresh. Regularly every year all progress breaks down. The thought that one-third of Lithuanian territory is still in Polish hands quenches every feeling on the part of Lithuanian officials except indignation. Speaking at an agricultural exhibi-

tion near to the Lithuanian frontier on August 26th, 1928—that is, shortly before leaving again for Geneva to meet the Polish representatives and to seek a settlement—Professor Voldemaras stated: "The Lithuanian Government has repeatedly declared that it is impossible to establish consular and diplomatic relations before the Lithuanians are masters of Vilna, and we can receive the representatives of Poland only in our own capital of Vilna."

In the meantime the fate of those who live along the administrative border becomes increasingly tiresome. There are farmers whose lands have been cut in two by the dividing line, others whose properties have been separated from their homes. If a particular farmer happens to be a Lithuanian, he is not allowed to enter that part of his estate which happens to lie on the Polish side of the line, and *vice versâ*.

Without prejudice therefore to the major diplomatic issue, M. Voldemaras met M. Zaleski at Königsberg on November 3rd, 1928, to arrange that such unfortunate people should, under certain conditions, be allowed to cross the frontier. The detail of the arrangement throws a pathetic light on the condition to which these neighbouring peoples have been reduced. The Preamble to the arrangement, which was signed on November 7th, begins thus: "The Lithuanian Government on the one part and the Polish Government on the other, desirous of granting certain facilities to the inhabitants of the two sides of the Lithuanian–Polish administrative line, inhabitants whose properties are cut or separated by the said line, to the end that a provisional agreement be concluded to that effect, have designated their Plenipotentiaries, to wit . . ." It is provided in the treaty that the people who live near the dividing line and

whose property is either cut into two or separated from them shall be given "passes" enabling them to cross the line; that minors under the age of fourteen shall be allowed to cross without passes, provided they are accompanied by people carrying passes; that the passes shall record full details of bearer's name, age, address, business, the precise purpose and scope of the pass and what not, the names of minors who might accompany the bearer, a photograph and autograph of the bearer, officially certified; that the authorities on both sides shall exchange lists of the people authorised to cross the line; that the efficacy of the pass shall be confined to the daytime—that is, between 4 a.m. and 9 p.m. from March 1st to September 30th, and between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. from October 1st to March 1st. It is provided in minute detail what commodities, agricultural implements, animals and the like may be taken across the line; it is even provided that those who cross the line by the authority of the pass shall be permitted to take food with them, but not more than one day's food. There are other clauses of the like detail. The necessity for such a treaty shows how strained and artificial are the conditions under which the people live.

§ 2. President Smetona

Lithuania is a small country containing fewer inhabitants than one half of London, but has loomed large on the European horizon because of the Vilna dispute. The two outstanding men in the country are the President, Antanas Smetona, and the "Dictator," Professor Augustinas Voldemaras.

President Smetona is the son of a poor farmer (*b.* 1874). He has continued poor throughout his life. He became

a politician soon after he left his cradle. At Palanga school, boy as he was, he defied his masters, who wanted to use Russian as the medium for teaching him. At the Mintanja lycée he headed a student campaign for a Lithuanian, or in the alternative a Latin, prayer-book to take the place of the Russian prayer-book decreed for use by the Russian authorities, and went to St. Petersburg as the students' delegate to interview the Minister of Education. At St. Petersburg University, where he went to study law, he took part in a students' strike, was expelled, spent two weeks in prison, was readmitted, was again expelled and sentenced to two more weeks confinement in a fortress for disseminating Lithuanian works.

He next collided with Polish nationalism. After graduating in laws at St. Petersburg (which he did, after all), he went to Vilna; but could not practise as a lawyer for lack of capital. He worked in a bank, and was warned by the head accountant, a Pole, against a propensity for Lithuanian propaganda. He persisted, and became a journalist with a pronounced taste for Lithuanian propaganda and an insatiable fertility in the execution. He combined journalism with his work in the bank. He grew in stature as exponent of Lithuanian virtues to such a pitch that one day (so the story goes) he thrashed a Polish colleague in the bank for telling him he "lied like a Lithuanian."

He began his political work as Vice-Chairman, later as Chairman, of the Lithuanian Committee for the succour of war sufferers. He earned his living by writing text-books on algebra and arithmetical theory for use in Lithuanian high schools, and even achieved the remarkable feat single-handed of devising mathematical and other terms in Lithuanian. His political

propaganda was a big factor in the achievement of Lithuanian independence (1918), and he was aptly made the first President of the new republic. The chief burden fell to him of organising the political life of the new country.

§ 3. Professor Voldemaras

Augustinas Voldemaras (*b.* 1883) is a young man who graduated in classics and in philosophy at St. Petersburg University just before the war. He speaks sixteen languages, including English. He has been on the teaching staff of Petrograd University, and is a professor at Kaunas (Kovno) University. It was he who formed the first Lithuanian Cabinet in November 1918; he has held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in four later Cabinets; and in December 1926 became both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister with dictatorial power. He presided over the Lithuanian delegation to the peace conference in 1919, and represented Lithuania before the League of Nations in September 1920, when Paderewski, the famous pianist-politician, ceremonially shook hands with him in token of Polish–Lithuanian friendship, just one month before General Zeligowski annexed Lithuania's capital. Professor Voldemaras is rigid and obstinate about the Poles, whereat one can hardly be surprised. On non-Polish questions he has made headway, has made valuable treaties with Italy and Germany and a Concordat with the Vatican.

His indignation against Poland was such that in 1927 he induced the League to consider it in the light of Article Two of the Covenant as a danger to the peace. It was on that occasion that Marshal Pilsudski went in person to Geneva to enact the second dramatic scene,

which proved, as we have seen, to be as empty of substance as the first. Marshal Pilsudski on that occasion recognised the inviolability of Lithuanian territory (minus Vilna, according to a mental reservation), and Professor Voldemaras agreed to put an end to the theoretic state of war (provided, according to the mental reservation made by him in his turn, that Vilna was restored to Lithuania). There is no end to the Vilna dispute. Professor Voldemaras will never yield, and he is young, with presumably a long life before him. On the evening of May 6th, 1929, however, he narrowly escaped from an attempt on his life. He and his party were walking from their car to the doors of the State Theatre to attend a Glazunov concert when seven shots were fired at them from an ambush in the garden in which the theatre stands. One of his aides-de-camp was killed on the spot, two of his companions, including a child, were wounded, and a girl who happened to be passing at the time was also wounded. Professor Voldemaras himself was untouched.

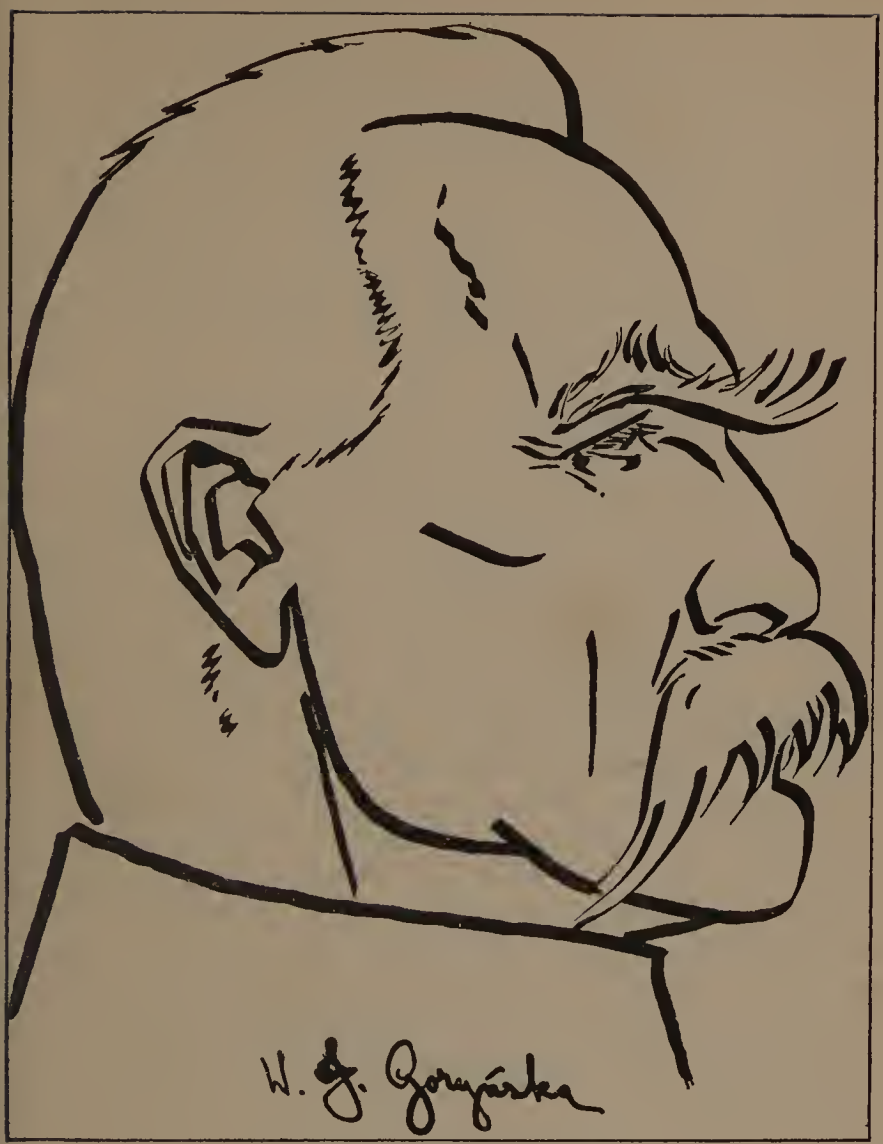
§ 4. Marshal Pilsudski

It is one of the mockeries of Europe that Marshal Pilsudski, the man on whom particularly falls the responsibility for Lithuania's grievance against Poland, is himself in origin a Lithuanian. Like Kosciuszko and Mickiewicz, he was born in Lithuania. His forbears were of the mixed Lithuanian–Polish–White Ruthenian stock that in the days of Polish–Lithuanian union used to defend the common country against Eastern and Western invaders. Marshal Pilsudski was born near Vilna, on the family estate of Zulov. The irony being not yet exhausted, he started his youthful dreams

by becoming a Socialist, in order that, as he used to put it, men should cultivate brotherly relations towards each other. Whether the means were appropriate to the end was another matter; but such was his idea. He grew up in an atmosphere of political oppression, such as made him long for freedom and made him regard it as a duty to fight against Russian domination. Why is it that those who have suffered from oppression are so often prone, when they win their freedom, to deny freedom to others? There may be more than one explanation of why it is so, but few will deny that it is so. Cromwell wrote: "Every sect saith 'Oh, give me liberty!' But give him it, and, to his power, he will not yield it to anybody else."

Pilsudski passed through an early phase as propagandist journalist fighting for Polish freedom, and so confounded his ideas that on a first of May at the close of the last century he was inciting workmen to take up arms against the Imperial Police. In 1900 he was tried for revolutionary intrigue. During the trial he was asked in cross examination why he, descended from an old, noble and wealthy family, wanted to undermine social security. He is said to have answered: "When Russian princes mounted the horses over the necks of their boyars, my forefathers were already free citizens. How then can you expect me not to fight for freedom to-day?"

He spent his youth trying to organise military revolt against Russia. The springs of his ideal of freedom were poisoned by the methods he adopted. He became a fervid militarist, longing to defend his Poland both from Eastern and from Western enemies. Such men are dangerous. The Great War served his purpose, and Poland became a free country. The militarist cancer of



MARSHAL PILSUDSKI

his mind then spread, and he became a megalomaniac. Lithuania he regarded as properly a province of Poland. He yearned for a big Poland, allied with big France. He bombarded the capitals of the big Powers with requests that his Legations be elevated into Embassies, his Ministers into Ambassadors. All his life he has put his faith in the sword. He does not see that his big Poland, swollen with alien and hostile elements, is thereby not strengthened, but weakened.

§ 5. M. Paderewski

I. J. Paderewski as pianist is famous throughout the world. He went off the lines for a brief period and became a politician. He saw as a vision the chance of Polish national independence resulting from the war, took to headlong propaganda to that end, and revealed himself as an impressive orator. At the critical moment he assumed control as President of the Council of Ministers and as Foreign Minister; was acclaimed throughout Poland as a national hero, piloted Polish independence safely into the harbour of the Treaty of Versailles, then ceased to be head of the State, but represented Poland at the League of Nations; and when, in the rarified atmosphere of Geneva, he found that his personal ideas of diplomatic common-sense were irreconcilable with the flamboyantly nationalist instructions sent to him, he resigned his mission, and returned to the piano.

§ 6. M. Grabski

Wladyslaw Grabski is one of the few men in present-day Polish politics whose name excites no controversy.

He is pre-eminently a financier, to whom Poland turns whenever she is in danger. In January 1924 the Sejm voted to him a sort of financial dictatorship by virtue of which he reformed taxation, cut down expenditure, raised loans, founded a Bank of Emission and by other means saved Poland from financial disaster. He refuses to be labelled by any party, and although he has held the position both of Prime Minister and of Finance Minister in Polish Cabinets, his tastes are professional rather than political. He is Professor of Political Economy at the Warsaw Agricultural College, is a specialist in the economic aspect of agriculture, has founded and organised agricultural co-operative societies in Poland. He is singularly free from the nationalism that has marred Poland's political practice since the war. During the war itself he devoted his energy to charity and relief work on behalf of refugees and other victims. Like the good financier he is, he abhors war, nationalist patriotism and all the other disturbing consequences of politics. His published work is mainly concerned with agriculture, and includes a "History of Agriculture in Poland."

CHAPTER TWELVE: PAX BOREALIS

§ 1. Sweden as Model. (M. Staaf, M. Lindman, M. Löfgren, M. Unden, M. Kreuger, M. Wallenberg, Bishop Söderblom, M. Trygger, M. Ekman, Baron Adelsward)

SWEDISH politics are seldom heard of: and therein is symbolised their healthiness. Sweden, indeed, may be taken as the model of what a political community ought to be. The politicians are unimportant in the life of the country, and the country is free from the harm done to trade, finance and all enterprise dependent upon security by the unsettling consequences of the politicians. In Sweden the politicians are kept in their place. They do what is necessary, and do it well, and for the rest they lie low. They are not spoilt by popular acclamation. Their work, in its importance and in the quiet way in which it is done, is comparable to the work of the London County Council. How many people in London know who is the Chairman of the L.C.C.? By contrast, how many people do not know who is Prime Minister? Yet the L.C.C. is a more efficient body for the government of London than parliament is for the government of Great Britain.

By a happy national characteristic, outstanding politicians are discouraged in Sweden. National leaders such as Gustavus Adolphus during the Thirty Years' War, Charles XII. in the early eighteenth century, are a rarity in Swedish history. Democracy is a principle that has worked well because it has been interpreted merely as the realisation of the old Viking ideal, whereby all citizens should have an equal voice in the choice of government and an equal legal status; and it is not exploited by unscrupulous politicians. In the course of

evolution the King has surrendered more and more of his power to the Riksdag, and the Riksdag in its turn is surrendering it back to the people at large, for, by a happy circumstance, the effect of proportionate representation has been to prevent any party from acquiring a dominating majority, and it is an accepted convention that the party in office has to consider from day to day the views of all parties. Political emotion, that deadly saboteur of national progress, is thereby reduced to a minimum. A political deadlock may be a glorious thing for a country. It muzzles the politicians, and enables trade and finance to function in a propitious atmosphere. In our time the distinguished Swedish politicians—Karl Staaff, the Liberal leader, Hjalmer Branting, the Social-Democratic leader, Arvid Lindman, the Conservative leader (who again became Prime Minister in 1928)—have made their reputation, not by noisy party polemics, but by non-controversial work in national development and constitutional improvements.

The women of Sweden, who were given the vote in 1918, have helped to quieten Swedish politics. Fortune too has contributed her share; for Russia had been a potentially disturbing factor on the Swedish horizon for several centuries, but the removal of the Russian centre from Petrograd to Moscow has also to a large extent removed Swedish concern.

In such a background one understands why Swedish political thought at home and abroad has a way of expressing itself in constructive work. M. Eliel Löfgren, when Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, published a valuable contribution to the important subject of international conciliation and arbitration. He has a distinguished reputation as a lawyer, was a former legal adviser to the Foreign Office, has represented Sweden

more than once at the League of Nations Assembly. His book is called " The Scandinavian Treaties of Conciliation and Arbitration and their Place in the International System of Justice " (De Nordiska förlikningsoch skiljedomsavtalen i deras ställning till det internationella rättssystemet), and is published by Messrs. Norstedt & Söner, Stockholm.

Sweden has taken a leading part since the war in the international movement towards arbitration as a method of settling international disputes, and a definite scheme for such an end, drawn up on Swedish initiative during the war by a Swedish–Danish–Norwegian Committee, helped in the framing of the League Covenant in 1919. Similarly, M. Östen Unden, another Swedish Foreign Minister, has been a pillar of common sense at Geneva, and especially made his influence felt in the disgraceful League crisis of March 1926. It is both a fair symptom of Swedish political common sense and a fitting reward of that common sense that Sweden has enjoyed a period of unbroken peace since the Napoleonic wars. Any other Swedish Foreign Minister, M. Löfgren (Liberal) M. Ernst Trygger (Conservative) would have made as determined a stand at Geneva as did M. Unden in 1926, if they had been faced with the like emergency. There is a continuity and a consistency in Swedish foreign policy unequalled in any other European country.

M. Unden is regarded in Sweden as merely a typical Swedish politician. The team spirit in parliament is highly developed. A recent incident gives a good illustration. M. Per Albin Hansson, the leader of the Social Democratic Party in Sweden—which party formed the chief opposition to the Conservative Government in 1929—publicly criticised the other leader of the Opposition, M. C. G. Ekman, leader of the People's Party, for

obstructing the Governmcnt from a purely party motive. His criticism was effective. To those who are accustomed to the excitement of political manœuvres the healthiness of the Riksdag may appear almost priggish, but the lack of the dramatic element in Swedish politics and the national preference for steady character rather than intellectual brilliance have been proved by a cumulative experience to be a good thing for Sweden.

It is not an accident that Swedish banking, finance and trade have won universal respect and admiration.

M. Ivar Kreuger, although born only in 1880, is the mainspring of the Swedish Match Company. It is he, and not any politician, who is the best-known living Swede. He is well known to the leaders of finance throughout the world.

In banking the name of M. Marcus Wallenberg (*b.* 1864) is little known in Sweden (for he has worked *in camera*), although he has largely contributed to the transformation of Sweden into a modern industrial country. He is well known in London. He contributed much to the detail of the Dawes Plan, has represented Sweden at international conferences, and has greatly helped the financial work of the League of Nations. He roundly refuses to have anything to do with politics, and resents the influence of the politicians on economic affairs.

One of the Swedish bishops, His Grace Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Upsala, is better known, both in Sweden and abroad, than any of the politicians. He has travelled widely, and knows England, Scotland, Germany and France particularly well. He has not only revivified the Church in Sweden, but has become one of the leading workers of the world in the cause of unity among the various Churches.

The leading politicians in Sweden have for the most part made their reputation in other fields than politics. The Conservative leader, for instance, M. Arvid Lindman, Prime Minister from 1906 to 1911 and again in October 1928, first made his name as a successful business man, and his latest Cabinet has taken an historic step in organising a friendly basis of collaboration between capital and labour. He is trusted by the working people of Sweden.

M. Trygger, who in 1928 was appointed Foreign Minister by M. Lindman, is a distinguished barrister and a former professor at Upsala University. He is a brilliant orator, and represented Sweden at the League Assembly in 1920, 1921 and 1922.

M. Carl Gustav Ekman (People's Party), who was Prime Minister from June 1926 to October 1928, was a manual worker at the beginning of the nineties, took up journalism at the age of twenty, and in 1913 became the editor of a paper in Stockholm. He made his name as a journalist before becoming a politician.

M. Löfgren, who has been mentioned above, is a specialist in international law. M. Unden is a political philosopher and a professor at Upsala University.

Baron Adelsward is typical of the Swedish quality. Farmer, industrialist, financier, politician, a former Minister of Finance, he has done much in applying modern electrical knowledge to the exploitation of Sweden's huge water power. He is also President of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies: his entire work is pacific and constructive.

One's general impression is that Swedish national affairs are decided by politicians whose primary quality is that of serious professional men.

§ 2. Nansen

Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian explorer, is the model pacifist. If the average politician of Europe had half his pluck, and half his humanity, Europe would be on the way to living down its reputation as the most savage continent on earth. The man who in 1895 spent several months between the 83rd and 86th degree of latitude, wandering on snow-shoes and dog-sleds in his pioneering search for the North Pole, calmly making his scientific investigation the while, and then paddled to Franz Joseph's land in a canoe, is a man who holds a high standard of human endurance and of human adventure. When Europe plunged into the Great War he saw no adventure in it, only a wasted heroism on the part of innocent individuals. He plunged, not into any of the war's partisanships, but into the difficult enterprise of helping the victims both during and after the war. He organised help for desolate prisoners in Siberia and for the starving Russians during the great famine. He became a diplomatist who recognised Geneva as the only profitable centre of diplomacy, and the League of Nations as the only object of loyalty. His attempts to conquer the unknown obstacles of Polar exploration brought him less trial of the spirit but more fame, than his attempts to counter the devastations produced among mankind by the political iniquity of war.

§ 3. The Estonians and the Danes

Other northern peoples besides the Swedes, cut off from European intrigue, lead peaceful lives. Their politicians are non-spectacular and good at their work. The Estonians, for instance, inhabiting the Eastern

shore of the Baltic, are fortunately free from the sort of imbroglio that has disturbed the peace of their Lithuanian neighbours. They are an ancient people who for 350 years before 1918 had been subject at different periods to Polish, Swedish and Russian rule, passed through a culminating period of German occupation in 1918 and thence regained their national independence. They had to repel an initial Russian invasion in 1919, but since then their politicians have been engaged in quiet constructive work. Konstantin Päts (*b.* 1874) had had a previous experience of Russian punitive expeditions. As a result of one of them he was sentenced to death by court-martial, but as an alternative to fulfilling the rôle thus assigned to him, chose to live abroad for five years (1905–1910). It was Päts who, on February 24th, 1918, formed the first provisional government in Estonia; and after an interlude of imprisonment, this time by the German occupying authorities, he became President of the Riigikogu (1921–1923). Another of the Estonian politicians who were imprisoned by the Germans is M. Otto Strandmann, who later became Prime Minister and President of the Riigikogu. M. Jaan Tönisson, the nationalist leader (*b.* 1868), is a lawyer and journalist as well as a politician, and he too has spent some of his years in prison for the crime of not passively lying down under Russian rule.

In spite, however, of a troubled background, the Estonian politicians are now concentrated on the works of peace. By 1925 they had stabilised the currency; by 1928 they had adopted the gold standard. They have stamped out illiteracy and have made English a compulsory subject in the schools.

Similarly in Denmark, after certain minor disturbances which developed soon after the war, the politicians have

allowed the country to rest in peace. They are more interesting as authors than as politicians. The Social Democratic leader, M. Th. Stauning, who became Prime Minister on April 29th, 1929, has written a play ("Life's Lies"); his predecessor in the Prime Ministership, M. Thomas Madsen-Mygdal (Liberal, 1926–1929), has edited an Encyclopædia of Agriculture; M. Neergaard, a former Liberal Prime Minister, has written interesting volumes on Gladstone and Cobden; Dr. Munch, Foreign Minister in the 1929 Cabinet, is the author of several historical text-books; M. Bramsnoes, Finance Minister in 1929, has several books to his name on economic subjects.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SOME EFFECTS OF CONTINENTAL DIPLOMACY ON WORLD AFFAIRS

THE Continental statesmen about whom some detail has been given in the foregoing chapters happen by the chance of circumstance to exert a world-wide influence on affairs. The English-speaking peoples both in the Old and in the New World hardly understand either the nature or the importance to themselves of what is done by Continental Europe. It is, indeed, a current factor in general diplomacy that the British politician can be relied on in an emergency not to understand the inner meaning of a European crisis. Those European statesmen therefore who are mainly responsible for what happens in Europe can and do ignore British interests, confident that if a crisis results in war, the action of the British Government will be determined by an emotional rather than by an intelligent motive. The example of the Great War illustrates the accuracy of such a diagnosis.

It is not every country in Europe whose diplomatic consequences touch Great Britain. The Scandinavian countries, for instance, could hardly ever damage British interests. The main storm-centres are the Rhine and the Danube. The danger of Balkan quarrels, as was shown in 1914, arises from the difficulty of localising them. The problem of the Rhine, of the relationship between France and Germany, lies at the root of European peace.

As a result of the Great War, French policy became a decisive force in Europe; but in spite of the Great War, British opinion has taken little realistic interest in the question how far the post-war diplomacy of the

Quai d'Orsay has added to British burdens and to British dangers.

There is a curious contrast between the American and the British attitude to Continental diplomacy, the contrast, no doubt, being due to the three thousand miles of the Atlantic Ocean. America was not too proud, but too sensible, to fight, so far as the merits of the Great War were concerned. It was a similar motive of common sense, as contrasted with misplaced idealism, which prompted the part she took in the last stages of the war. As neutral, America lent money to the belligerents, which was mostly spent in America for arms, munitions, food and clothes. The Bankers' Press of New York has stated in a work on Inter-Allied debts that "American bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and transport interests profited to the extent of over three billion dollars from French disbursements in the United States alone," and added that the allied countries spent £2,400,000,000 in America on war munitions. Europe borrowed, but hardly any cash crossed the Atlantic to this side. America's industry boomed. America's trade balance in 1913 had been $691,000,000. In 1915 it rose to $1,768,000,000; in 1916 to $3,000,000,000, and so on. Gold deposits, securities, war bonds accumulated in America, and by the end of the war America held more than one half of the entire supply of the world's gold. American statesmen at first enjoined strict neutrality on American citizens, but as the British navy swept the seas of German shipping, American commercial interests became identified with the Allied cause. In 1917, Great Britain, having spent and lent the unimaginable sum of £2,000,000,000 on the war, found herself at the end of her tether. America entered the war at that propitious moment. France, Italy and other non-British

Allies thereafter found it difficult (let Mr. Mellon explain it as he will) to borrow more money from America. The war, however, must go on, and those who said it shouldn't were imprisoned. Great Britain had no more money of her own. It is an historical fact which Mr. Mellon cannot deny that after America entered the war Great Britain lent nearly £1,000,000,000 to her European allies, and that (having no money of her own) she borrowed that identical sum from the United States. In effect, therefore, the United States lent that money to France and Italy on a British endorsement of the resultant obligation. America was right in her financial instinct, as Mr. Baldwin proved in 1923, and as the French and Italian background of non-payment emphasised. When America entered the war, it was the prevailing view (in America) that the best service America could render the Allies would be to become their banker. Oh, that we in Great Britain had statesmen of such a calibre!

President Wilson was an idealist. He stopped the war. To that extent he suited America's purpose. She had pegged out her investments, and President Wilson's idealism alone could stop the war. None of the European fools who started the war could stop it. Another year of it, and even the British Treasury might have found it too much of a burden to pay America. So Mr. Wilson's pacific work had to be done. His further aspiration for continuing the operation of American diplomacy in Europe was not to be reconciled with America's idea. America, therefore, hauled him back, crucified him, and he died. The Treaty of Versailles was cut right out. No American sat on any Allied body which dealt with the peace problems, except as a detached observer. The League of Nations—that European act of repentance—was cold-shouldered by America.

By contrast Great Britain reacted at the very beginning of the war to the emotional stimulus of an invaded Belgium and of an invaded Serbia, and proceeded to offer herself as the chief victim in the catastrophe.

What, however, of the result? The war ended ten years ago; and in those ten years the affairs of Europe, and in particular of France, have been exerting their influence on British interests. A word deserves to be written on that subject. The story of Anglo-French relations, as evolved since the war, illustrates how important may be French influence on British policy and on British interests. The effect is constant, and cannot be ignored. The geographical nearness of France to England is in itself a factor in British diplomacy; for four-fifths of the food consumed in the British Isles comes from overseas, and it is estimated that at any given moment the forty million inhabitants of these islands are within a fortnight of starvation. The German blockade of Great Britain during the war came near to cutting her off from the outside world. If it had succeeded in that object, the war would have been over in a fortnight. Similarly, a French naval blockade of Great Britain is of potentially comparable importance, a circumstance which lends point to the consistent French naval policy, as pursued since the war, of maintaining a large submarine fleet. It is distasteful to right-minded people to dwell on diplomatic potentialities in terms of potential war; it is still more distasteful when the hypothesis contains the somewhat cynical element of war between recent allies and friends. Such unpleasant material, however, does, unfortunately, go to the making of diplomatic technique.

There seems little doubt, as the facts quoted below will perhaps suggest, that French diplomacy since the

war, for one reason or another, has worked from an anti-British motive. It has had a somewhat controversial effect on British interests, and in particular on British relations with the United States. Subconsciously, no doubt, French minds have been influenced by a certain uneasiness due to the fear that the British diplomatic principle, traditionally known as the balance of power in Europe, has continued to operate. There appears to be some justification for such a feeling. When Germany was powerful, and when a German menace threatened Europe, or was thought to threaten Europe, the Anglo-French Entente passed unchallenged in the minds of British men of affairs. When after the war Germany was subdued, British policy tended to help Germany in her recovery and to react against the French policy of "vae victis!" France, on the other hand, has traditionally regarded Germany as her enemy, and since the war has exploited to the full the opportunity of keeping Germany down. She has regarded Great Britain favourably or unfavourably, according as the prevailing Foreign Secretary in Great Britain has lent himself to, or dissociated himself from, that supreme French objective.

It seems necessary to bear in mind that broad axiom of French diplomacy if one is to understand the recent effect of France on Great Britain.

The resultant problem for Great Britain has produced two schools of thought. There are those in this country who think that France should be given her head, others who take the opposite view; but there is only one estimate of the extent to which the problem of France protrudes in several fields of British policy, economic, financial, diplomatic.

Sir Austen Chamberlain's conception of what is

expedient in this matter has differed from that of every other post-war British statesman who has come into contact with the Quai d'Orsay. Lord Curzon, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, all agreed in refusing to yield ground to France. Mr. MacDonald in 1924 attempted without yielding ground to humour France. Helped at the outset of his enterprise by the supersession of M. Poincaré by M. Herriot, he achieved some measure of success, but did not hold office long enough for his tactic to be tested. Sir Austen Chamberlain's five years of office gave us the consistent and apparently deliberate spectacle of a British Foreign Secretary who took France for granted, and who adjusted his policies not in Europe only, but in the United States, to suit the postulate of the Quai d'Orsay.

The effect of France on British policy during the last five years has cut deep. In China, to quote an exception that proves the rule, Sir Austen Chamberlain's diplomacy was uniformly successful.

There is perhaps something to be gained from an examination of the different results produced by recent British diplomacy in China on the one hand, where French influence has been dormant, and in Europe and the United States on the other hand, where French influence has been active. It is one of Sir Austen Chamberlain's marked qualities, and by the same token one of his marked defects, that once he has set out on a certain course of policy he pursues it with a straightness and determination that do not deviate. That quality was the secret of his success in 1925, when for nine months, in the face of widespread opposition, cynicism and distrust, he maintained his own faith and enthusiasm in the Locarno ideal, and by the sheer force of his steadfastness contributed an important factor to the success of

that diplomatic enterprise. Similarly, his policy towards China has pursued a course which has never deviated. In 1925 he showed himself to be ahead of every other Power interested in China by advocating the immediate abrogation of the extra-territorial judicial system, the granting of full tariff autonomy to China, and the restitution to China of the territorial "concessions." Throughout 1927, when the acute phase of the Kuomintang xenophobia spent itself illogically and almost exclusively against Great Britain, he doggedly maintained the same progressive attitude to which he had earlier committed himself. No sooner in 1928 did the Kuomintang party establish its ascendency on a formal basis by promulgating a new constitution, than Sir Austen Chamberlain carried his policy into practice by concluding a treaty of which the effect was to restore complete customs autonomy to China.

It is a matter of general agreement among British commentators that the policy of the Baldwin Government towards China was a success. If one analyses the principles on which that success was built, and if one applies those principles as a test to Sir Austen Chamberlain's policy in Europe, the failure in the latter field begins to explain itself. It seems clear that the main reason why British policy in China justified itself was that it was steadfastly based on a full and frank recognition of the legitimate aspirations of the Chinese people, combined with a firm insistence on British rights. It was recognised, for instance, that it was impossible for the Treaty Powers to maintain their arbitrary control of Chinese customs. The mere fact that an organised public opinion in China resented and opposed such foreign control was wisely regarded by the British Foreign Office as a sufficient indication that that control could no longer be

maintained. China, in short, was treated as a nation of human beings, actuated by commonplace feelings of patriotism, which naturally had a Chinese motive and none other. Sir Austen Chamberlain quickly decided, and remained true to his opinion, that the Chinese demand for effective sovereignty over China could not and should not be resisted. British " concessions " were evacuated, extra-territorial privileges were surrendered, tariff autonomy was conceded. The result was a contented China ready to collaborate financially and industrially with Great Britain, to their mutual benefit.

It is true that the European problem is in some ways more difficult, and that up to a point any effective move towards reconciliation in Europe presupposes the co-operation of France. It was the exaggerated deference to France that produced the lopsidedness of British policy in Europe. British troops continued to occupy German territory in spite of the fact that official British spokesmen never tired of protesting their desire to evacuate that territory. The exclusively juridical aspect of the Treaty of Versailles is not an important consideration either in British official policy or in British public opinion. The fact that the territory of one member of the League of Nations was occupied by the armies of other European members of the League of Nations might reasonably be regarded as a violation of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the Covenant of the League of Nations; and it was a palpable travesty of the Locarno principle. At any rate, there was a gross disparity in the fact that on the one hand Great Britain was restoring to China her territorial sovereignty, and on the other hand maintaining her troops in occupation of German territory. Yet Sir Austen, having set himself upon the path of collaboration with France, right or wrong, persisted in that

course till the end of his tether. His weakness after Locarno became a real tragedy, for it had the effect of mocking even his cherished Locarno treaties. He remained in office for three and a half years after the treaties were signed. Their purpose was to restore the status of friendly equality between Germany and her former enemies; yet he handed back his seals to the King before he had withdrawn his troops from German territory. France tolerated Locarno because of the British military guarantee. When, having obtained that guarantee, France refused to honour the other side of the bargain, Sir Austen weakly, blindly, obstinately acquiesced. The recurrent expression of his "desire" to see the Rhinelands evacuated only shed a light on his failure to have them evacuated. He danced to the tunes of the Quai d'Orsay, and in the course thereof alienated both Germany and the United States.

Perhaps the worst manifestation of the French sabotage of British interests has been seen in the field of Anglo-American relations. It has been a consistent and subtle tendency on the part of French officials and French commentators, on the one hand to give first consideration to the interests of the United States as against the interests of Great Britain, and on the other hand to suggest reasons why British opinion should be on its guard against the designs of American diplomacy. French finesse is a highly delicate instrument. It does not lend itself to tangible analysis in the recital of incontrovertible fact; and it is understood only by those who have been brought closely into contact with the Quai d'Orsay. There are simple-minded people in Great Britain who have proved easy victims and who have had their minds poisoned against the United States. The process has also led to definite diplomatic results. In

the summer of 1928, for instance, the Quai d'Orsay induced the Foreign Office to associate itself with the now notorious Anglo-French proposal for a naval "compromise."

The plot was stage-managed with such exquisite precision that it came to a head at the very moment when the "Kellogg" Pact was signed in Paris. French opinion had been anxious in 1927 to secure from the United States a bilateral pact, of which the practical effect would be to engage the United States never to make war on France; but when in 1928 Mr. Kellogg transformed M. Briand's original proposal into a multilateral pact against war, French enthusiasm was rapidly deflated and French finesse bent itself in covert ways to the task of belittling, and if possible of destroying, the effect of Mr. Kellogg. The Anglo-French naval compromise was a master stroke of French diplomatic strategy, and a monument to the dull-wittedness of the British diplomatists who were ensnared. The French approach was correct enough in its juridical aspect. The Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference had reached a deadlock. The Tripartite Naval Conference of 1927 had failed. What could be more desirable than that France and Great Britain should attempt to restart negotiations? The French Press maintained a complete silence about the matter until Mr. Kellogg had actually sailed for Europe to sign the Kellogg Pact. While he was actually on board ship the French Press suddenly disclosed the alleged fact that a new Anglo-French Entente had been concluded of far greater potential significance than any Kellogg Pact. The popular enthusiasm that in many countries had been trained on the impending ceremony of the signing of the Pact was dissipated, and replaced

by confusion and doubt. The Quai d'Orsay had triumphed.

It next remained for the British Government, having sown the wind, to reap the whirlwind. Sir Austen Chamberlain had in effect accepted at the hands of M. Briand a suggestion: (1) that France should agree to support the British naval contention as against the American naval policy which had broken up the Three Power Conference; (2) that in return for that friendly gesture Great Britain should give to France a free hand in her European policy in land armament, and should drop the objections formerly entertained against that policy as enunciated by France in the discussions of the Preparatory Committee of the League's Disarmament Conference. The outcry that arose in Great Britain when that disclosure was made was such that the Anglo-French compromise was promptly dropped; but we were then left piecemeal to discover that the two parts of the Anglo-French scheme had not, after all, been correlated as the two parts of a bargain, and that the British Government, in agreeing no longer to oppose the French thesis about land armaments, had done so on the separate merits of that question by itself. The British Government, in its simplicity, argued that France could impose her will in the long run, and London therefore agreed that in the computation of land effectives account should be taken only of men under arms, and not of trained reserves. The result was that France would be given a clear field to perpetuate trained reserves to any extent she liked, a circumstance which reduced all talk of European land disarmament to rubbish.

The net result of the whole episode was that the naval sop to Great Britain was valueless, France retained what she had gained in the matter of armaments on land, the

moral capital of the Kellogg Pact was depleted, and Anglo-American relations were embittered. It was hard to believe that British diplomacy could ever have hoped to produce international harmony by so frail a stratagem as the submission to the United States of a Franco-British rehash of a British proposal already rejected by the United States, especially as the stratagem was conceived and carried out in a manner and at a time calculated to arouse the maximum of resentment in the United States. There has appeared, however, no evidence to show that the British Government acted from any other motive than that of a genuine desire to remove a Geneva deadlock. The British Foreign Office, if one may describe a crude event in a crude metaphor, had had its leg pulled by the Quai d'Orsay.

The documentary evidence in which that event is enshrined, "Papers Regarding the Limitation of Naval Armaments (Miscellaneous No. 6, 1928, Cmd. 3211)," does not detract from, but rather adds to the gloom that the event itself had produced. In a dispatch of August 10th, 1928, to the British Embassy in Washington, Lord Cushendun, acting on behalf of Sir Austen Chamberlain (who was ill), made this perplexing reflection: "It is not believed that any American interest can be prejudiced by the withdrawal of His Majesty's Government's opposition on the military reservist question. An agreement on land disarmament, even if it is in our view not entirely satisfactory in the matter of military reservists, would represent an important stage in the general progress of disarmament, and would be far better than no agreement at all. Moreover, an acceptance of the French Government's thesis on the reservists question will have the important effect of winning the French Government over to the British and American side in

the matter of the classification to be adopted as a basis for naval limitation."

To quote that passage at this day seems almost unkind to its author; but can it really be true that those who were charged with British diplomacy in August 1928 took such a view—the view, namely, that in discussing "disarmament," an agreement with France allowing to France the maximum military armament would not only be "far better than no agreement at all," but "would represent an important stage in the general progress of disarmament"? If a man were to discuss with his conscience the problem of smoking less or drinking less, and found that he could agree with his conscience only on the basis of smoking more and drinking more, could he fairly represent such an agreement as "far better than no agreement at all"? Indulgent people might sympathise with him in his mentality; but if he went on to argue further that such an agreement "would represent an important stage in the general progress towards" non-smoking and non-drinking, indulgence would stiffen into irritation, for the argument would amount to a trifling with words and with facts. Yet that would be a precise analogy to Lord Cushendun's argument above quoted. One might expect to find such an argument in "The Hunting of the Snark," but not in Miscellaneous No. 6 (1928).

A different sort of light was shed on the nature of Anglo-French relations when in the winter of 1928–1929 an old propaganda was revived (no doubt at the instigation of certain cement manufacturers) about the merits of a submarine tunnel between England and France. The propagandists on the British side sought to counter the stock argument of the old-fashioned people, to the effect that such a tunnel would deprive Great Britain of

her insularity, by the rejoinder that this island lost its insularity when the first aeroplane flew the Channel, and that moreover a tunnel would in times of war (assuming France to be an ally) defeat the enemy's submarines and save this island from starvation more effectively than ever could the British Navy. The interesting thing, however, was that the argument was confined to strategic considerations; whereby was illustrated the extent to which fear still rules the minds of those whose fate it is to live in Europe. The only interesting diplomatic speculation that was produced was the question whether a Channel tunnel would still further expose Great Britain to the diplomatic blackmail of France. The word blackmail would never be breathed, even if it might be thought, by professional diplomatists, but the strategic argument about the value of the proposed tunnel as a food-purveyor presupposes France as a friend. The circumstance that France holds the strategic balance between Great Britain and the Continent, and the fact that most French diplomatists fully appreciate that circumstance, explains much of the French bias in British policy and the total lack of a British bias in French policy. Would the existence of a Channel tunnel increase or lessen the French diplomatic lever? In practice it would probably have no effect if France were a belligerent enemy, for it could be blown up or flooded from either side; and if France were an ally, it would probably be valuable for war purposes.

What is interesting is that such questions are raised by a simple project for easier, quicker, and more voluminous communication between France and Great Britain. In diplomatic theory those two countries are friends; yet the mere suggestion that they should be the better able to get at each other shakes the foundation of a

certain type of British patriot and excites the enthusiasm of a certain type of French patriot.

In all her attempts to hitch the British flag to French crusades, the Quai d'Orsay has relied on the axiom that Great Britain by her position is potentially at the mercy of France. There are two opinions about the accuracy of that axiom; but if French finesse had been as clever on the long, as it undoubtedly is on the short view, there no doubt would have been introduced some modification of the extremist French principle of making use of London on the one hand and of ignoring London's interests on the other. It would give the most lively pleasure to British students of French policy if they could discover even one post-war instance where French diplomacy or French finance has helped Great Britain. In the Near East, in Western Europe, in naval problems, French diplomacy or French submarines have discouraged or embarrassed or actively thwarted British diplomacy, even though British diplomacy has been unwaveringly loyal to France. In finance the effect of France has been especially ungracious, and even harmful. Not only has France not repaid her debt, but till 1929 she delayed the funding of the partial repayment recommended by Mr. Churchill and M. Caillaux in August 1925. Moreover, on two well-marked occasions French policy has shown a clear disregard for the other financial interests of Great Britain. The first was the occasion of the Wiesbaden accord, which is described in § 5 of Chapter Two above; the second that of the Thoiry accord, which is described in § 3 of Chapter Three above.

The full effect of the financial movements caused by the war, in particular of the part played in them by the French Treasury, has probably not yet been exhausted. The main movements are of Marks from Berlin and of

sterling from London. The bulk of the reparation payments goes to France by virtue of her 52 per cent. share; but France concurrently pays a small part only of what she owes to the United States and Great Britain. The result clearly must be a preponderance of the buying over the selling of francs, with consequent appreciation of the French exchange. Great Britain, by contrast, is honouring her debt to the United States and accepting a virtual repudiation by France (and Italy) of the bulk of the debt owed to herself. Yet the obligation for the service of the money lent to Europe during the war remains for ever a burden for the British taxpayer. Can there be any doubt that, for instance, the great gold drain of 1929 from London to Paris, with all its resultant disturbance to British trade and to British finance, was at least partly explained by the financial settlements made by the diplomatists?

Those people who take a serious view of the problem of Europe, of the fears and vendettas which are the curse of Europe, recognise that France is an indispensable party to any attempt at constructive progress. It is not from any hasty or ill-considered sense of grievance against France that British opinion is inclined to be critical of France. The most serious people in Great Britain try to understand the condition of nervous fear, fear of Germany, which is largely responsible for the reactionary trend of French diplomatic thought. That is one reason why Sir Austen Chamberlain was so enthusiastically supported by imaginative British opinion when he gave to France the military guarantee embodied in the Locarno Treaties. The King made him a Knight of the Garter for that work, and therein interpreted the unreserved view of British public opinion. There can be no peace in Europe until the triangle—Germany, France, and

Great Britain—is amicably composed. French fear of Germany, however, is not yet allayed, in spite of the League of Nations Covenant, the Permanent Court of International Justice, the Locarno Treaty, the Kellogg Pact. The best hope for the future appears to lie in the effective vindication of the Kellogg Pact, helped as it undoubtedly will be by the now probable event of the United States becoming a member of the World Court.

INDEX

Adelsward, 212
Alexander (King), 135

Barthou, 29
Beneš, 121
Bethlen, 109
Bramsnoes, 219
Breitscheid, 72
Briand, 8
Bukharin, 191

Caillaux, 51

Duisberg, 65

Ekman, 212

Finaly, 54

Grabski, 210

Hainisch, 108
Herriot, 24
Hindenburg, 68
Hodža, 127

Korošec, 135
Krassin, 190
Kreuger, 212

Lindman, 212
Litvinov, 173
Löfgren, 212
Loucheur, 26

Madsen-Mygdal, 219
Marx, 71
Masaryk, 112
Maurras, 41
Mayr Harting, 125
Millerand, 30
Munch, 219
Mussolini, 76

Nansen, 217
Neergaard, 219

Paderewski, 210
Päts, 218
Pilsudski, 207
Poincaré, 16
Pribičević, 135
Primo de Rivera, 97

Račić, 135
Radić, 135
Rakovsky, 181

Schacht, 61
Seipel, 106
Smetona, 204
Söderblom, 212
Spina, 125
Staaf, 212

Stanning, 219
Strandmann, 218
Stresemann, 58
Švehla, 133

Tönisson, 218
Trygger, 212
Tuka, 131

Unden, 212

Veniselos, 149
Voldemaras, 206
Volpi, 90
Vukičević, 135

Wallenberg, 212